

January 23, 2012

Larry,

We are in the very first stage of considering various conceptual Alternatives for our Trestle.

The following is the guideline set by the Coastal Conservancy for their Grant as stated in the RFP (Request for Proposals), City of Petaluma, Feb 24, 2011, pg. 7:

Prepare Schematic Design Alternatives and Preliminary Project Budget

- Develop and describe at least three project alternatives and identify the preferred alternative. This will include identifying and evaluating several restoration approaches for the trestle, which may range from salvaging and refurbishing as much of the existing trestle as possible to removing the entire trestle and reconstructing a new structure using authentic design and materials.

I would like to provide some clarification which reflects on the above RFP agreement and why a more authentic reconstruction of the historic trestle in sections should be considered in more detail. This might be accomplished with either splicing the good piles with sleeves to new piles, and/or wrapping the existing piles in a uniform manner which would create the original historic trestle appearance. I believe various solutions which preserve most of the original authentic design should be seriously considered. Casting the existing trestle in cement and cladding the stringers in steel, or the steel screw pile solutions does not fit the RFP mandate. The process of engineering three alternatives should reveal inspired solutions that are so good that they make it hard to choose between them. Then comparisons could be made on the basis of necessity, cost effectiveness, impact and appearance. When an alternative is submitted containing immediate and obvious characteristics that cause you to avoid it as a viable solution, then it is not an alternative worth considering. It is not an alternative. It forces you to consider another alternative with other significantly compromising features.

REASONS FOR SAVING THE HISTORIC APPEARANCE OF A HISTORIC STRUCTURE:

Chris Stevick's replies are in red.

References to other documents are in green

The following is a summary of my meeting with Larry Zimmer and Diane Ramirez during the week of 25 December, 2011.

1. Larry Zimmer: "You strongly prefer wood piles to steel. You also prefer the idea of sleeving the piles with steel rather than the concrete jacket when needed, and (you prefer) providing a uniform approach to the pile repair. "

Stevick: "Yes! I strongly prefer preserving the Trestle's defining features which it had when it was built as new in 1922 (1. HSR pg. 37: The trestles defining features).

Some of these features such the pile cap beam might be adequately cast in cement to appear as a wood beam although most pile caps appear sound (Oct. 14, 2011 Appendix D, Timber Evaluation Report pages 4,5, & 6).

Other features such as the diagonal bent bracing, which was added later for seismic strength, may (or not) be needed. The proposed Alt 1 mixing of cement jacketing of every other pile has a long list of CONS, in the report. "A uniform or near uniform wrap in protecting wood in the vulnerable tidal zone would be preferable". ( 2. see example Winzler & Kelly Appendix G)

2. You felt alternative 2 is unattractive. You believe it is an unrealistic alternative that forces the choice between alternative 1 and 3.

I find each of the alternatives to be either extremely unsightly or completely nonhistoric or both. There are other alternatives such as splicing a new top portion of the piles. (Pile splicing possibility combined with other pier repair Appendix E Sea Shield Repair appropriate?)

The trestle is an identified historic resource under CEQA sections A and D. (4.see HSR pg 25?) Section 106 requires prior to the demolition of a historic resource which is Alternative 3. You must seriously consider the possibilities of restoration, and I don't believe either Alternatives 1 or 2 does that adequately.

Alternative 2 is the same as Alternative 3 without requiring the total demolition of the trestle. Alternative 1 clads everything in steel pipe piles which requires maintenance (5.W&K concept design pg 4.4) or cement which describes itself as "band-aid construction." (see the "cons" chart of Alternative 1)

3. You believe Alternative 3 is "not an option to be funded". You are concerned that this alternative will eliminate any historic restoration type grants. Diane's research has not revealed any feasible grants that we would make ourselves ineligible for. If you can provide any additional information that would be great.

I believe all potential funding sources to be important and historic restoration grants could be a major contributor. I think the original 1922 trestle's historic features are not significantly compromised in all three alternatives making it ineligible for any grant with the word historic its title, of which there are many. The Trestle has already proven its incredible grant generating potential even in this economy. The only thing that can kill this project would be failing to make the most of what has already been granted (6.see design RFP pg 7) The Trestle actually covers a multitude of grant potentials. Rarely is any one project supported by so many different categories: Cultural, Environmental education, ecological preservation, retail economic support, a significant destination saved, removal of blight, economic stimulus, rail preservation, historic preservation and education all wrapped into one (example 7).

Did I leave out anything like Civic Pride? Petaluma has always been at the cutting edge of technological solutions, from Incubators to the first west coast electric trains to the present telecommunications industry. This is part of our image. If designed well, it is hard to underestimate the support from corporate, foundation, private and public sources that this project will generate. National recognition will follow.

4. You stated in general that "if it doesn't look old, it is a problem".

Petaluma has a rare and unique intact historical downtown. It would help our historic image if this iconic symbol of Petaluma had an intact historical appearance. (see Images of Petaluma supplied) The Trestle's original 1922 design has a number of surprisingly positive features which should be considered including:

- a. The top surface of the wood deck matched the top of the rails and made it level and pedestrian friendly. The complete surface would create 7,000 square feet of additional public space for the heart of our downtown.
- b. The original Trestle design included a midspan connection, to support a spur (later removed) that went to nearby warehouses. (7. See picture attached.) This provides a historic justification for extending a large section mid-span, for a pedestrian friendly, useful deck area from fender pile to sidewalk. It is likely that the Trestle's land-deck connection was used continuously for cargo access.
- c. This would provide a complete walk-around of the large C St. culvert opening into the river This may not seem important, until you realize the environmental educational tool this provides. The message is "What you put into the street has a certain and direct affect on the quality of your river, bay and ocean." This is one reason the Coastal Conservancy gave us this grant.
- d. Engineers have said that the difficult problem in trestle design is protecting against lateral movement during a major seismic event. This unique trestle is not isolated, it does not span a river or a gorge, as most trestles do. Instead, it could be tied to the continuous embankment which it borders, preventing lateral movement.
- e. The massive stringers which are large enough to support full rail and have never been in direct River contact. They will be carrying a load now approximately one half of what they were engineered to carry. There are 3,000 linear feet of 8 x 18-inch beams. To choose an alternative that discounts the condition of these beams or discards them outright would be a major waste. Shown here are pictures of sister stringers laid at the same time just a few blocks away.

If the Trestle were repaired in sections components would be revealed for evaluation along the way, ensuring that all parts in good condition could be salvaged. As the actual condition of individual components is yet a matter of speculation prior to construction, contingent plans for use, reuse or replacement of major items should be built into the plans. The low impact approach, sequentially demolishing the deck and re-building new sections each of which would serve as a work platform for subsequent work, would avoid the complete removal of the existing floating dock. (See W&K November 2011 Conceptual Design Report, pgs. 4-7 item D) Rehabilitation section by section appears to be the most preservation-responsible solution and may also turn out to be the most cost effective and least disruptive.

As we have seen, you can plan a project out of existence. There is no need to redesign the fundamental attributes of this trestle. At this stage all we have to do is to consider engineering some choices that are the most reasonable approach to replicating its original design.

Thank you,

Chris Stevick