



MEETING DATE: 5/2/05
ITEM NO. 14
DESK ITEM

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: MAY 2, 2005

TO: MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

FROM: DEBRA J. FIGONE, TOWN MANAGER

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Debra J. Figone", written over the name in the "FROM" field.

SUBJECT: REVIEW UPDATED REPORT ON THE ROBERTS ROAD BRIDGE CLOSING AND PROVIDE DIRECTION ON THE AVAILABLE OPTIONS
A. ADOPT RESOLUTION CLOSING ROBERTS ROAD BRIDGE TO VEHICULAR TRAFFIC, OR
B. REPAIR AND REHABILITATE THE EXISTING STRUCTURE, OR
C. REPLACE THE EXISTING STRUCTURE

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept attached emails from Kathleen Lynn, Steve and Sharon Wilson, the Babalis Family, Kim Gavin, Tom and Peggy Willey, Rodney and Kathy Smedt, and Jon and Julee Bode. These items were received after the agenda packets were distributed.

Attachments:

Emails from Ohlone Court residents

PREPARED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "John E. Curtis", written over the printed name.
JOHN E. CURTIS
Director of Parks and Public Works

Reviewed by: PS Assistant Town Manager OK Town Attorney _____ Clerk Administrator

____ Finance _____ Community Development

Revised: 5/2/05 1:22 pm

Millie Sperath - Roberts Rd. Bridge closure

From: "Kathleen Lynn" <kathee@gte.net>
To: <jcurtis@losgatosca.gov>, <manager@losgatosca.gov>
Date: 5/1/2005 7:47 AM
Subject: Roberts Rd. Bridge closure

To whom it may concern:

I am and have been an Ohlone Court resident for 8 1/2 years. I oppose the permanent closing of the Roberts Road Bridge for the following reasons.

1. Already an obvious increase in cars parked on Ohlone by patrons of Vasona Lake, which will worsen in the summer.
2. Skateboarders have been using the area as a hangout, skateboarding around the Bridge Closed signs causing traffic hazards, and leaving trash. This may also worsen during the summer when school lets out.
3. The unsightly Bridge Closed signs diminish the appearance of our neighborhood, causing decreased property values.

I am in favor of replacing the bridge and of the bridge being reopened to vehicles until the new bridge construction begins.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Lynn
128 Ohlone Court
LG, CA 95032
408-354-5060

Millie Sperath - Agree w/keeping bridge closed (w/certain assumptions)

From: <swilson1979@comcast.net>
To: <jcurtis@losgatosca.gov>, <manager@losgatosca.gov>
Date: 4/30/2005 11:47 AM
Subject: Agree w/keeping bridge closed (w/certain assumptions)

To whom it may concern,

We live at the intersection of Roberts Road and Ohlone Ct. We wanted to make you aware that *not* all residents of the neighborhood located on Ohlone Ct are in agreement as to what the final outcome of the Roberts Road Bridge decision should be. The closure of the bridge thus far has not been a hardship, we are more in favor of keeping it closed as long as certain conditions are met such as

- keeping at a minimum *all* of the current "*No Parking Areas*" on both Roberts Road & on Ohlone Ct

- Making sure that the closed off area continues to be free from vagrancy, loitering or any other disruptive activities

- The closure structures are made to blend in more closely with the existing park-like environment.

If the decision is made to rebuild the bridge we are very concerned about all of the issues involved with demolition and reconstruction.....such as the impact on the habitat and living environment for local residents and also wildlife during and after the project.....disruption of the environment and severe noise and congestion during the project.

We are also concerned that a larger bridge would be built creating more traffic, speeding and congestion than already existed with the old bridge.

We feel given the huge costs not only financial but on quality of life are not worth the 2 minutes in commute time saved by having to drive the added block around.

Thank you ,

Sincerely

Steve & Sharon Wilson (101 Ohlone Ct)

Millie Sperath - RE: Bridge Closure

From: "tassia" <tbabalis@atmel.com>
To: <manager@losgatosca.gov>, <jcurtiis@losgatosca.gov>, <jcurtis@losgatosca.gov>
Date: 5/1/2005 10:54 PM
Subject: RE: Bridge Closure
CC: <kimgavin@comcast.net>, "Tom Willey" <tom.willey@tw-partners.com>, "Peter Littman" <eis@cruzio.com>, "The Smedts" <smedts@comcast.net>

We are very unhappy about the bridge closure. We have also read the report and plan on attending the meeting on Monday night.

We would like to let you know that it IS a major inconvenience to us having that bridge closed. We only have one way into and out of our community. We feel less connected to our downtown by not having access across that bridge. Also, it has made a difference in where we shop and spend our money. For example, we love the new Wallgreens better than Long's but now we find ourselves shopping more at Long's out of convenience. It is that sense of driving forward getting somewhere rather than backtracking to go somewhere.

On X-mas Eve, before the closure, I attempted to go to 7-eleven for a "last minute" item. I was waiting at the light to make a left turn onto Blossom Hill Rd from Roberts Rd. The police man approached my car and told me that I could only make a right hand turn due to the Festival of Lights. To go to 7-eleven that night had the bridge been closed would have been a major ordeal. I would have had to go all the way up to Blossom Hill Rd and Los Gatos Blvd make a U-turn (if it's allowed at that intersection) and then come back down Blossom Hill Rd, passing 6 lights as oppose to only 3 lights.

When we bought our home in this neighborhood we had access from two different ways. When buying our home, the immediate surroundings did play a part in making the decision to buy. The quaintness of our neighborhood matched the charm of an old, one-lane bridge. Now we are forced to look at bright orange, ugly signs that read road closed every time we enter and leave our neighborhood. We wonder for the people who live near the sign how they feel looking at it everyday. What an eye soar!

Please consider re-opening the bridge while we have CalTrans rebuild the bridge to meet the necessary requirements. We do not mind having a slightly wider bridge and having it striped for a one lane bridge.

Sincerely,
The Babalis Family
140 Ohlone Ct
(408) 354-1689

John Curtis - FW: Robert road Bridge

From: <kingavin@comcast.net>
To: <jcurtis@losgatosca.gov>
Date: 5/1/2005 10:07 PM
Subject: FW: Robert road Bridge

----- Forwarded Message: -----

From: kingavin@comcast.net
To: jcurtis@losgatosca.gov
Cc: manager@losgatosca.gov
Subject: Robert road Bridge
Date: Mon, 2 May 2005 05:01:35 +0000

This is a letter concerning the Roberts Road Bridge. I read the report . It was very interesting reading. It was noted in the report that know one had complained of the bridge closure. One of the reason for that was we were told to wait until the city had time to put out this report on the bridge. That is why you have not heard from us. Also, I have had many people ask how long the bridge will be closed. So they are thinking that this is temporary NOT permanent.. Most all the neighbors on Ohlone Ct are still unhappy of this decision and WANT THE CITY TO REOPEN THE BRIDGE again.

After reading the three options. I feel the 3rd option seems the best option for all involved.
WHY?

1. the city has to fix the bridge no matter what option is picked
2. they won't have to pay the large cost of repairing the bridge because Cal Tran has offered to pay the bulk of the cost.
3. there will be less traffic on Blossom Hill Rd. and University Ave.
4. if the bridge is fixed we won't have to worry that we are going to loose our gas, electric, and water if there is an earthquake or it falls
5. the values to our homes will not fall

I hope you will change your mind and open the bridge.

Regards,
Kim Gavin

Millie Sperath - Roberts Road Bridge closure

From: Tom Willey <tom.willey@tw-partners.com>
To: <jcurtiis@losgatosca.gov>, <manager@losgatosca.gov>
Date: 5/1/2005 4:47 PM
Subject: Roberts Road Bridge closure
CC: Jim & Kim Gavin <kimgavin@comcast.net>, Peter & Tassia Babalis <tbabalis@atmel.com>, Sandy Jordan <blessx4@yahoo.com>

Dear Debra,

Thank you for the copy of the report concerning the Roberts Road Bridge closure. For your information: In February, the Ohlone Court Home Owners Association elected a new Board of Management. I have passed on your report to them.

However as individual residents of Ohlone Court, my husband and I have some thoughts and comments on the various options that your report discusses.

First of all, at the meeting where the council decided to close the bridge, our understanding was that there would be an investigation on the Bridge closure options and the results would be reported back. Our Homeowners committee had decided to await those results. I am somewhat alarmed that your reports misreads our patience as lack of interest in whether the Bridge stays open or closed. I believe that a substantial majority of the Ohlone Court residents are unhappy about the closure and want an option that will re-open the bridge to vehicular traffic.

Originally the bridge closure was scheduled at the beginning of December. However, because of the expected traffic congestion at the Ohlone/Blossom Hill junction during the "Festival Lights" in Vassona park, the closure was delayed until January. I think that its fair to say that the residents of Ohlone Court appreciated the gesture. It would also suggest that Los Gatos Town Council also realize that the closing the bridge is and will continue to be a substantial inconvenience to the Ohlone Court residents.

A few weeks ago, there was a Persian celebration at Vassona Park. To help ease congestion and also to help the normal parking problem in Ohlone Court, the entrance to our neighborhood was restricted at the Roberts/Blossom Hill junction. Basically, the entrance lane into Roberts from Blossom Hill was blocked off by cones leaving the exit lane to be shared by both entering and exiting traffic. Whilst we appreciated the efforts made by the Parks department to alleviate congestion, we saw much confusion between traffic trying to go straight through Blossom hill and traffic trying to simultaneously entering exiting our neighborhood via Roberts.

Overall, the closure of the Roberts Bridge has been a substantial inconvenience to our neighborhood and during busy days at Vasonna park it downright difficult to get in and out of our neighborhood. Also, because of the awkwardness of physically getting to downtown Los Gatos, residents are tending to go elsewhere to shop, eat, etc. For these reasons, we would

strongly urge the Los Gatos Town Council to restrict the options to those that only include reopening the Roberts Road Bridge to Vehicular traffic.

From the report, it appears that you have one option to close the bridge and two options available to reopen the Bridge: Option 2 - Repair of the Bridge and Option 3 - Rebuilding with majority funding from CalTrans.

We would like to recommend that you pursue Option 3 and rebuild the bridge. However, we would also like to request that until the Bridge construction actually starts, the Bridge should be reopened to vehicular traffic. We agree with the continuation of the maximum load restrictions but we would also suggest that you should build a physical barrier to restrict the allowable vehicle width at both ends of the bridge. That way Garbage and UPS type trucks would find it impossible to cross the bridge.

Finally, We'd like to apologize for not attending Monday night's meeting as we will be on vacation in Europe.

Best regards,

Peggy and Tom Willey
134 Ohlone Court
Los Gatos
(408) 354-0848

Millie Sperath - Potential closure of Roberts Road Bridge

From: "Rodney Smedt" <rsmedt@revera.com>
To: <parcs@losgatosca.gov>, <manager@losgatosca.gov>
Date: 5/1/2005 11:23 PM
Subject: Potential closure of Roberts Road Bridge
CC: <smedts@comcast.net>

Date: 05-01-2005

To: Los Gatos Counsel Members

From: Rodney Smedt

139 Ohlone Ct. Los Gatos, Ca 95032

Subject: Decision on potential closure of Roberts Road Bridge

Dear Los Gatos Town Counsel Members,

I would like to express my concerns and dissatisfaction about the potential closure of the Roberts Road Bridge.

My Wife and I purchased our home at 139 Ohlone Ct. over 8 years ago. One of the significant features of our home and neighborhood has been the crossing of the Roberts Road Bridge as a gate to getting into our neighborhood. It is a very well known landmark, most people seem to know "that little bridge that crosses the creek by Vasona Park", I use that as a reference to giving people directions to my home, I know it sounds "sappy" but I have looked forward to crossing that Bridge for many years as I come home from work, it's sort of a crossing point between work and being home for me. I must say that having the Bridge closed has been really upsetting for me for the past 4 months; it's a frustration that I get reminded by every time I go to work or drive toward down town. In addition my Wife feels somewhat cut off from downtown and lastly, bridge closure has truly changed our convenience shopping habits.

I have read the report and understand the assessment and possible alternatives. I would like to let you know that my opinion is that we should go the route of having the bridge replaced which will end up being ~90% funded by the State of California. The bridge will lose a bit of charm but it will remain a

nice crossing over a beautiful creek. This solution will also eliminate the future dangers of material falling onto LG Creek Trail pedestrians caused by bridge deteriorations.

I few other points to consider:

Doesn't the bridge carry Gas lines that could be broken if the Bridge concrete deteriorates greatly. What would be done to ensure the integrity of the Gas Line if the Bridge is not repaired or replaced?

Isn't the Bridge going to be a hazard to pedestrians in the future also? The total weight of several pedestrians crossing the bridge can easily out weight a Vehicle crossing the bridge. I personally have had more than 20 people on that Bridge as we walked up to Campo Di Bocce. That total mass of my group was close to that of our SUV. This would mean that you would have to limit the number of Pedestrians allowed on the bridge in the future to keep it safe, this does not seem feasible to do.

Given this, it doesn't seem viable to simply close the Bridge to resolve the safety issues. It seems to me that the best alternative to maintain the charm of the area in addition to maintaining vehicular and pedestrian safety, keeping in mind the Town's budget is to replace the bridge with the support of the State of California.

I look forward to seeing you at the meeting on May 2.

Regards,

Rodney & Kathy Smedt

139 Ohlone Ct

Los Gatos, Ca. 95032

Rodney Smedt

Vice President, Engineering

Millie Sperath - Roberts Road Bridge

From: Jon Bode <jonbode@gmail.com>
To: <jcurtis@losgatosca.gov>, <manager@losgatosca.gov>
Date: 5/2/2005 1:02 PM
Subject: Roberts Road Bridge
CC: Julee Bode <juleebode@earthlink.net>

As residents of the Roberts Road/Ohlone Court area, we wanted to weigh in with our opinion on the bridge closing. We live on Roberts Road, on the Vasona Park side of the bridge.

We remain in favor of keeping the bridge closed rather than spending either town funds on repair or Caltrans funds on replacement.

Closure of the bridge does not appear to have led to any loitering problems, increased use by skateboarders, dangerous use by children, or any of the other adverse effects some had feared before it was closed. Additionally, after an initial period of a week or two the number of vehicles who mistakenly drive down the road and have to turn around at the barriers has settled at a negligible amount. This type of traffic has no adverse affect on the quality of the neighborhood at this point.

It would be nice at some point if the barricades were changed to something more aesthetically pleasing and consistent with the beauty of the area. I think big orange signs make a great deal of sense initially in getting peoples attention but hopefully over time that level of caution is no longer needed. Additionally, it makes sense to continue monitoring the area to insure it does not become a place of increased loitering.

Although it was handy to be able to drive over the bridge and avoid driving on Blossom Hill Road, the loss of that option doesn't create a hardship for anyone. The traffic light at the Blossom Hill Road responds quickly to Roberts Roads drivers. If we could snap our fingers and open the bridge back up, I'd understand why that makes sense. But with a bill of \$1,000,000 or more, I fail to see the need to change the current situation. Clearly there are greater needs for money than that, regardless of whether the money comes from our city budget or a different pool of tax dollars.

If the decision is made to replace it with a complete two lane bridge, I urge you to consider efforts to control the speed on the road, perhaps with speed bumps. Current and former drivers on Roberts Road seem aware that there isn't a need to fear police radar, and speeds can be excessive. With a wide modern bridge, it would give people a chance to get a "running start".

Thanks for taking the time to consider our input.