



Via USPS & Electronic Mail

July 27, 2009

Mr. Bijan Sartipi
CalTrans
Department of Transportation, District 4
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

RE: Doyle Drive Reconstruction Project Traffic Impacts

Dear Mr. Sartipi,

The Bridge District greatly appreciates the Doyle Drive presentation by Mr. Gene Gonzalo of your staff. The presentation, however, generated substantial concern among Bridge Directors and staff as regards plans for implementation of the project. Given Caltrans' fast-track approach to contracts 3 and 4, it is critical that the Bridge District's and San Francisco's concerns be addressed quickly and effectively in order for the project to remain on schedule. I and my fellow Bridge Board members look forward to your responses regarding our concerns.

Traffic Management Plan Concerns

The District was very concerned to hear Caltrans staff refer to the recently published Traffic Management Plan (TMP) as "inadequate" in light of your stated plan to award construction contracts 3 and 4 within the next few months. We certainly agree that the TMP is inadequate and want to know what Caltrans is going to do to ensure that not only the issues of Golden Gate Bridge District are addressed but also the concerns of the City and County of San Francisco. In the Final Environmental documents (EIR/EIS), Caltrans committed to prepare an adequate TMP before starting construction. I trust that you will work with all stakeholders, including the Bridge District, to finalize an adequate TMP prior to awarding Contract 3.

This close coordination with the Bridge District is critical as we currently provide daily operational support to Doyle Drive via lane configuration and incident response services.

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We work to match lane allocation on Doyle Drive with that on the Bridge in order to provide smooth traffic flow. We need to know specifically how this lane allocation will work during the construction period, particularly in light of your plan to use a moveable median barrier on a portion of the temporary detour. It is also critical that we have a clear incident response plan during construction. At one point in his presentation, Mr. Gonzalo referenced a not-yet-seen Traffic Operations Plan. Maybe this information will be developed in that Plan?

We are also concerned that much of the impact to traffic will substantially exceed what was studied in the EIR/EIS. Caltrans now acknowledges that the closures for the ramps that connect Doyle Drive with Park Presidio will be in effect for a longer period of time than was disclosed in the environmental document. For example, we now know that the ramp from northbound Doyle Drive to southbound Park Presidio will be closed as much as three years. The other ramp will also be concurrently closed for twelve to eighteen months. While it is not uncommon for there to be slight variations between closures shown in the EIR/EIS and those shown in the construction drawings once complete, we are concerned that the closures are at least double in duration when compared to what is shown in the EIR/EIS. Your staff person showed little concern about this discrepancy, but we are not at all sure we agree with his conclusion that the difference is insignificant in regards to the duration and concurrent nature of the closures. We were told that 40 percent of the peak traffic volume will be rerouted through our Toll Plaza area, which is a substantial addition to already crowded conditions.

Detour Impacts on Toll Plaza Area Circulation, Golden Gate Bridge Through-Traffic, and San Francisco Streets

As a result of the closure of both of the ramps connecting Doyle Drive and Park Presidio, traffic will be redirected onto both the San Francisco street network and the roads in the vicinity of the Toll Plaza, including Merchant Road and Lincoln Blvd. and the already congested East Parking Lot. The current plans for Contract 3 direct all the detoured traffic to the Toll Plaza ramps. This is in stark contrast to the commitment made in the EIR/EIS in response to District concerns regarding temporary construction impacts on roads not designed to accommodate high volumes of through traffic. The EIR/EIS response states: "During the construction period all efforts will be made to minimize traffic related impacts to the GGB visitor area."

As you know, these long-term ramp closures will affect local San Francisco traffic travelling in both directions between the Marina District and the Richmond District. Are specific routes going to be identified as detour routes? What level of signage and traffic control will be in place to assist not only San Francisco locals but visitors in moving through and around the congestion area? San Francisco representatives on the Bridge District Board would like to see maps identifying detour routes as soon as possible. Additionally, the District would like to see analysis of the travel time impacts that drivers and transit users will incur as a result of the diminished capacity in the corridor.

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The EIR/EIS offers no information regarding the operational impacts and associated congestion due to the ramp closures. On page 3-88 the EIR/EIS states: "Closure of these ramps will entail a shifting of an estimated 1,360 vehicles in the AM peak hour and 1640 in the PM peak hour to other routes or times." Later, on the same page, it says that 40 percent of these trips will utilize the ramps at the Toll Plaza. This equates to an extra 544 cars using the both the northbound off-ramp and the southbound on-ramp at the Toll Plaza during the busiest hour in the morning and an extra 656 cars using the northbound off-ramp and the southbound on-ramp during the busiest hour in the afternoon. The EIR/EIS offers no context regarding the current number of cars using these ramps or the traffic capacity of these ramps. Similarly, the closure of the ramps connecting Doyle Drive and Park Presidio will result, during the peak hour, in almost 1,000 extra car trips on already busy City Streets. Yet no information is provided to show which streets will see an increase in traffic along with the magnitude of that increase.

According to your current contract plans, all construction truck and equipment traffic is directed to use the Toll Plaza ramps. How will this impact the operation of these ramps and the local roads in the vicinity of the ramps, not only in terms of today's traffic levels but in terms of the additional traffic that will be diverted to these areas during ramp closures? Has Caltrans looked at how the extra additional traffic will impact pedestrian and bicyclist safety in the East Parking Lot?

According to Caltrans's schedule, starting in February 2011, after Contract 3 and 4, Caltrans will implement a multi-year detour that will provide only five lanes for both directions of traffic for mainline Highway 101 by utilizing the southbound high viaduct and the southbound Battery Tunnel. Today there are six lanes through this stretch of roadway so this will create a "choke point" that will reduce current traffic capacity. As Caltrans and San Francisco County Transportation Authority staff acknowledged at the meeting with District staff on Tuesday, July 21, no traffic analysis has been performed to determine the adequacy of the five lane detour. This is of great concern to us. How will Caltrans operate these five lanes during different times of the day? For example, currently in the A.M. peak this stretch of Highway 101 is operated with four lanes southbound and two lanes northbound. How will the five lane detour be operated on both weekdays and weekends? What will be the additional travel time for buses and motorists using this five lane detour? The Bridge District is also concerned that delays in the completion of construction will extend the period of time that the multi-year detour, which completely eliminates one lane on mainline Doyle Drive, is in place. In a construction project of this magnitude and complexity, delays are a possibility and would place an even greater burden on the five lane detour route.

Transit, Pedestrian, and Bicycle Travel Impacts

In the peak hour about 1/4 of all trips in the corridor are carried by transit. The TMP devotes only one sentence, on page 8, to transit. When the TMP is re-done, Caltrans should explore the need to expand transit service to carry more people, at least during the period of time when there is the complete elimination of one traffic lane. If Caltrans determines additional transit is needed, how would you propose to implement and fund

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this additional transit service? Please note that the Golden Gate Ferry system is currently operating at or near full capacity in the morning peak period and there is not sufficient excess parking available for many new riders at our Larkspur parking lot.

It is also important to note that both PresidiGo and MUNI buses use the ramps and roads in the vicinity of the Toll Plaza where the ramp closure traffic will be detoured as discussed in the previous section of this letter. Additionally, there is substantial pedestrian and bicycle traffic in the East Parking Lot area. Has Caltrans analyzed how the traffic diverted to travel through this area will impact pedestrian and bicyclist travel patterns and safety in the East Parking Lot at the Toll Plaza?

Economic Impacts

The District is seriously concerned that the above traffic detours and traffic restrictions will result in a reduction in motorists crossing the Golden Gate Bridge with a corresponding reduction in toll revenues. Tolls are the principal funding source for the District's bridge operations and maintenance as well as our bus and ferry services. Any reduction in toll revenues could seriously impact the District's ability to provide its current levels of bus and ferry service which would exacerbate the traffic congestion caused by the project. The project may also impact visitor access to our Gift Shop and Café, both of which are important sources of ancillary revenue. There may be other fiscal impacts as individuals seek to change their travel patterns in response to the construction. The District expects Caltrans to address any financial losses we incur as a result of your project.

Preservation of Utilities

The main power supply for the Golden Gate Bridge, including for the Toll Plaza and all of our maintenance facilities, is a PG&E power line that runs on Doyle Drive. The District seeks Caltrans commitment to preserve uninterrupted PG&E utility service during the entire course of construction.

Timing of Project Completion

In light of Caltrans' desire to accelerate the completion of the reconstruction project, we are concerned about the lack of nighttime work. Working both day and night would allow for the acceleration of project construction and reduce the length of time that the ramps are closed and detours in place. Nighttime work is done on highway projects in much more congested residential and commercial areas than the Presidio. Will Caltrans consider using additional nighttime work as a way to speed the project forward and possibly reduce congestion in the corridor during peak travel periods?

On an ancillary note, the 75th Birthday of the Golden Gate Bridge will take place over Memorial Day weekend in 2012 and it will be critical for our agencies to adequately plan far enough ahead of the celebration events to ensure that the transportation system works adequately for the large number of expected celebrants.

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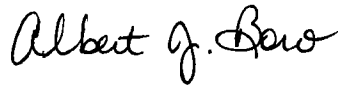
Project Funding

We would like an opportunity to talk further with you regarding the funding of the Doyle Drive project. We remain committed to our contribution of \$75M plus an additional \$5M funneled through the District on behalf of both Marin and Sonoma Counties. We have a very clear Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the provision of that funding and are concerned that Caltrans may be unaware of the deadlines called for in that MOU. A meeting to discuss this aspect of the funding plan would be helpful to us all, I believe.

Conclusion

We recognize that Doyle Drive is a vital project and the Bridge District supports its completion. However, it is critical that the issues and concerns of the Bridge District and the City and County of San Francisco be addressed prior to award of construction contracts 3 and 4. We look forward to working with your staff to settle these issues as soon as possible. In this way, the revised approaches can be incorporated into your fast-tracked approach to the reconstruction of Doyle Drive.

Sincerely,



Albert J. Boro
President, Board of Directors

Cc: Members, GGBHTD Board of Directors
Will Kempton, Caltrans
Jose Luis Moscovitch, SFCTA
Diane Steinhauser, TAM
Suzanne Smith, SCTA
Nat Ford, SFMTA
Craig Middleton, Presidio Trust
Frank Dean, GGNRA
Steve Heminger, MTC