

**HEALDSBURG AVENUE BRIDGE  
PUBLIC MEETING #1  
Meeting Notes**

May 11, 2010 – 6:00 P.M.  
Healdsburg City Hall Council Chambers

**START OF MEETING**

Mayor Wood called the meeting to order at 6:03:45 PM and gave background information on the bridge project and gave a timeline of discussions, studies and actions that have taken place since the 1980's to date.

- In the late 1990s, the City contracted for engineering of the seismic retro-fit of the bridge. Field investigations were conducted which included scour analysis and soil borings. No action was taken.
- In 2004 the City performed emergency repairs on the bridge to address buckling of the expansion joints and failed bearings at the supports.
- In September 2007, the City accepted the final report from HDR engineering which identified certain alternatives, their preliminary costs, and funding options.
- In March 2008, City Council accepted staff's recommendation to select bridge replacement as the preferred alternative for the purposes of securing the **maximum amount of grant funding** available.
- Late 2008 staff submitted an application to Caltrans for grant funding.
- July 2009 Caltrans authorized spending of \$1 million and agrees to reimburse the City \$885,300 for environmental studies and preliminary engineering services.
- October 2009, City Council directed staff to continue to RFP process and include sufficient environmental review and preliminary engineering for the rehabilitation alternative.
- March 2010 City Council accepted staff recommendation selecting Omni-Means as the principal consultant for conducting environmental studies and engineering services.
- This decision was not made lightly. Several fundamental points in the selection of Omni-Means were:
  - No preconceived solution or project alternative - blank slate approach
  - Understood that the process is as important as the technical and environmental review and a demonstrated history of working with diverse community groups.

Mayor Wood reiterated that **no alternative has been selected yet**. He further stated that the first open house introduced and outlined the process that would be used for identifying and ultimately selecting alternatives, which would undergo further environmental and engineering studies. Further comments and suggestions were also solicited.

Mayor Wood said that the second open house introduced the project concepts identified after the first open house. These concepts will be evaluated against each other to determine which concepts would be elevated to “alternative” status for further environmental and engineering studies—**one of which will be rehabilitation.**

Mayor Wood stated if individuals wished to provide comments and not speak, comment cards were available for people to submit their comments. Written and verbal comments will be treated equally. Mayor Wood requested to please return any written comments by May 15, 2010. All written and verbal comments will be noted and made available on the project Web site after the May 15 deadline.

City Manager Pettus discussed the meeting protocol: 6:13:17 PM

- Identical information presented by multiple speakers will be limited
- Different opinions are welcome
- It is okay to disagree, but be sure to show respect for one another
- One person speaks at a time; wait your turn
- No side conversations
- No one dominates
- Be a good listener—listening does not require agreement
- Respect one another
- Be specific. Use examples to illustrate key ideas
- Avoid characterizing the motives of others
- Avoid taking “cheap shots” name calling and otherwise disrespectful behavior.

### **POWER POINT PRESENTATION 6:15:41 PM**

Mr. Ross Ainsworth, Omni Means, gave background information of the team that Omni Means assembled to perform the environmental studies which included: Cornerstone Structural Engineering Group; ICF Jones & Stokes, environmental/public outreach; Pacific Hydrologic Incorporated, river hydrology; Parikh, geotechnical, Blais & Associates, grant writing and management; and Crabtree Land Surveying.

Mr. Ainsworth stated the project is expected to take 24 months and during the process there will be meetings at various stages of the project where the public will be able to comment and provide input. At this time the project is at the concept evaluation phase and will be followed by the environmental documentation phase and the contract documents phase.

As a result of the Open House Meetings, 15 concepts have been prepared and 13 of the 15 result in preserving the existing bridge. The concepts are as follows:

- Concept 1 No build
- Concept 1A No build, leave existing bridge as is
- Concept 1B No build, close bridge to all but pedestrian and bicycle traffic
- Concept 2 Rehabilitate existing structure
- Concept 2A Rehabilitate existing bridge in place
- Concept 2B Rehabilitate existing bridge and convert to one-way westbound
- Concept 2C Rehabilitate existing bridge and convert to one-way eastbound
- Concept 2D Rehabilitate existing bridge and convert to one-way alternating direction, traffic signal controlled
- Concept 2E Rehabilitate and widen existing bridge in place
  
- Concept 3 Replace existing structure with new structure
- Concept 3A Replace with similar style bridge
- Concept 3B Replace with new style bridge
  
- Concept 4 Rehabilitate existing structure for bike/pedestrian use only; construct new vehicle structure on new alignment
- Concept 4A Place new bridge adjacent and north of existing bridge; rehabilitate existing bridge for pedestrian and bicycle use only
- Concept 4B Place new bridge adjacent and south of existing bridge; rehabilitate existing bridge for pedestrian and bicycle use only
- Concept 4C Construct new vehicle structure on new alignment to the north and rehabilitate existing structure for bike/pedestrian use only
- Concept 4D Construct new vehicle structure on new alignment to the south and rehabilitate existing structure for bike/pedestrian use only
  
- Concept 5 Rehabilitate existing structure for bike/pedestrian use only and relocate; construct new vehicle structure on existing alignment
- Concept 5A Replace with new bridge and relocate existing bridge to the north; rehabilitate existing bridge for pedestrian and bike use only
- Concept 5B Replace with new bridge and relocate existing bridge to the south; rehabilitate existing bridge for pedestrian and bike use only

Mr. Ainsworth discussed the nine criteria that would be used in the Concept Analysis Process to evaluate the concepts. Criteria include: historic preservation, public safety, environmental sensitivity, right-of-way impacts, constructability, design standard conformance, cost, transportation operations, and funding capability (level of City contribution).

Individuals were encouraged to submit comment cards.

There will be one more public meeting in July prior to making a presentation of the findings and recommendations to the City Council.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Mel Amato 6:28:47 PM questioned the conclusions of the structural load and sufficiency rating evaluation prepared by Cornerstone and opined the sufficiency rating of 44.2 was incorrect. Mr. Amato stated that according to his calculations the sufficiency rating is 53.5. Mr. Amato discussed the importance of having a rating over 50 as it pertains to funding. A bridge with a sufficiency rating of over 50 is only eligible for rehabilitation funds. The City could choose to demolish the existing bridge and replace it with a new structure; however, the federal government will only fund 88% of the rehabilitation cost.

Mr. Amato cited cost estimates for rehabilitation compared to the cost of a new concrete bridge and reiterated that if Council wished to replace the bridge the additional funding would have to come from a different source, not the federal government.

Mr. Amato further discussed Cornerstone's two weight increases (the pedestrian weight and the total bridge weight increases) and the reasons for their invalidity, which further discredited the validity of Cornerstone's report.

Mr. Amato also commented on the conceptual new bridge alignments and opined a new bridge would have to be constructed differently than proposed, i.e. different alignment and wider. He added that new bridge alignments would also impact Memorial Beach and adjacent properties. Mr. Amato urged Council, given the information provided and the scarcity of funds and possible deficit the City is facing, to focus on the rehabilitation alternative.

Mr. Ray Holley 6:38:02 PM spoke in favor of Concept 2A, rehab in place, and making the bridge reasonably seismically safe. Mr. Holley inquired about trucks and buses using the bridge and inquired what the reasons were for the fire trucks not using the bridge. He asked that the bridge be renamed the Healdsburg Memorial Bridge and that the area be master planned including Railroad Park, Memorial Beach Park to make it more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

Mr. Richard Burg 6:41:38 PM stated the design concepts presented came from community input and inquired where the design of a bridge by a bridge designer would come from. Mr. Burg opined not all the options were explored, for example having one bridge that would carry both railroad and vehicular traffic. Also there is no rainbow

bridge in the proposed alternatives and opined a creative bridge designer alternative was also missing. Mr. Burg further opined that the question of whether the bridge can be made safe should be answered before proceeding with the project. First ruling out what is completely infeasible would save a lot of money. Mr. Burg expressed concern with the concept analysis ranking criteria and noted that no one has reported the safety record of the bridge over the last 89 years

Mr. David Deitz 6:46:59 PM stated that in regards to the safety issue/concerns that have been brought up, it has been determined that old bridges can be rehabilitated and made safe and stronger. He suggested the consultant look at the bridge on the Eel River across 101 and bridges in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Iowa, Ohio and Kentucky to see how those bridges were rehabilitated. He urged Council to save the structure that means so much to this community.

Mr. Rody Jonas 6:48:40 PM stated the bridge is very important to the people of Healdsburg and honoring the past is very important, however, it was his opinion that it should not be at the expense of the best possible future for the community. Mr. Jonas added that although he liked the bridge and the rehabilitation concept, there is real value to the sister span concept. This provides the opportunity for the growth projected in the General Plan and increase access to areas that have a lot of potential.

Ms. Ellen Minter 6:50:47 PM stated the Friends of Healdsburg Memorial Bridge has created a website which is linked to the City's website at [HealdsburgMemorialBridge.com](http://HealdsburgMemorialBridge.com), which also contains information on all the steel truss bridges that have been saved as well as a petition for people to sign to save the bridge.

Mr. Poss Pragoff 6:52:20 PM stated significant number of Healdsburg residents perceive Council has a preconceived bias toward the replacement of Memorial Bridge and for most citizens perception is truth. The questionnaire did nothing to allay the citizens concerns and asked that as the consultants continue their work Council pass a resolution that states that "unless there are compelling safety reasons for its replacement, the Council indicates its preference for the rehabilitation and preservation of Healdsburg Memorial Bridge." Mr. Pragoff opined such a resolution would go a long way to assure Healdsburg citizens who are skeptical of the process and who have concerns about fiscal responsibility that the Council does not have a bias of replacement. Mr. Pragoff inquired how to go about asking Council to formerly consider adopting such a resolution.

Mayor Wood stated Mr. Pragoff could appear before the entire Council under public comments and ask that the matter be placed on the agenda for consideration. Mayor Wood assured the audience that Council does not have any preconceived notions and reiterated that prior actions taken were regarding "bridge replacement as an alternative"

was a means for getting the maximum amount of funding for the project. The City Council is required to look at all the alternatives as part of the environmental review process.

Ms. Tara Harold 6:57:54 PM opined the bridge should be maintained as a scenic bi-way.

Ms. Laura Tietz 6:59:59 PM stated a lot of effort and money is being spent to find out the ideas of a relatively small number of people and opined the money should be spent on the real data not the ideas. Ms. Tietz spoke in favor of renovating the existing bridge.

7:03:21 PM Individual identifying himself as one of the silent majority, opined the bridge has been functional and it is still functional today. He added the City does not need to pursue funding for a new bridge and that the bridge should be rehabilitated and kept for posterity and its basic usage, not for bicyclists.

Mr. John Soracco 7:05:48 PM stated that if people think the bridge is not safe they should take 101. Mr. Soracco opined it is a waste of time and money to go through this process and it is the community's sentiment to fix the bridge.

Ms. Holly Hoods 7:07:30 PM spoke in favor of preserving the bridge and discussed the historical importance/significance of the bridge. Ms. Hoods asked Council to make the bridge safe and functional and to preserve the resource.

City Manager Pettus thanked everyone for their comments.

Public Works Director Kirn reminded interested individuals to submit written comments if desired and added that they could also submit their comments via e-mail. All the comments received would be posted on the project website.

**ADJOURNMENT 7:10:41 PM**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 P.M.