

San Quentin Reuse Planning Committee Minutes

Thursday, May 2, 2002

San Rafael Corporate Center

Committee Members Present:

Alex Amoroso
Al Boro
John Dupar
Phil Frank
Steve Kinsey

Joan Lundstrom for Larry Lanctot
Dana Miller
Jessuina Perez-Teran
Annette Rose
Bill White

Committee Members Absent:

Paula Gutierrez
Huey Johnson

Stephen Roulac
Sim Van der Ryn

Staff and Consultants Present:

Kristin Drumm Collins, Marin County CDA
Dan Dawson, Marin County CDA
Alex Hinds, Marin County CDA

Dan Potash, DVP Associates
Michele Rodriguez, Marin County CDA

Process Timeline and Outcomes

The minutes from April 10 were reviewed and approved with no changes.

Supervisor Kinsey reviewed the twelve-month meeting schedule.

An article on San Quentin prepared by the Marin Historical Society was distributed.

Existing Transportation/Circulation Conditions and Current Studies

Dean Powell, Principal Transportation Planner and Art Brook, Transportation Engineer for Marin County Department of Public Works, presented information on current traffic, transit, and circulation conditions in the vicinity of San Quentin.

- The two main highways in the area, Interstate 580 and US 101 are undergoing improvements including the gap closure (carpool lane project) on 101, reconstruction of the 101/580 interchange, and seismic retrofitting of the Richmond Bridge. Average Daily Traffic (ADT) on 580 is 65,000 vehicles near San Quentin while on 101 it is 174,000 vehicles south of the Greenbrae interchange and 150,000 vehicles between the Greenbrae and 101/580 interchanges.

- San Quentin is currently accessed from the east via Main Street through San Quentin Village and from the west on East Sir Francis Drake Blvd. ADT on Main Street is 2,400 vehicles while on East Sir Francis Drake at the west gate it is 29,000 vehicles.
- In addition to providing access to the west gate of the prison, Larkspur Landing, and the ferry terminal, East Sir Francis Drake Blvd serves as the connection between 101 to the south and 580 to the east. This is primarily because there is no direct ramp connection from westbound 580 to southbound 101 and northbound 101 to eastbound 580 at the 580/101 interchange. It is estimated that traffic volume on East Sir Francis Drake could be reduced 33% if a direct ramp from westbound 580 to southbound 101 was constructed, but it is estimated to cost between \$50-60 million.
- Trips to the prison are concentrated during three primary periods coinciding with shift changes, the two busiest occurring between 6:00-7:00 a.m. and 2:30-3:30 p.m. ADT at the east gate is 1,950 vehicles and 1,100 vehicles at the west gate. Thus, the prison generates about 3,050 total trips per day. East gate traffic is primarily automobiles as truck traffic is directed to the west gate.
- There are six bus routes that serve the prison with stops at the west gate, on Main Street in San Quentin Village, and on E. Francisco Blvd. There is no stop westbound at west gate because there is no safe pedestrian crossing of East Sir Francis Drake at the gate. The ferry terminal at Larkspur Landing has 21 daily departures and is served by additional bus service.
- The 101/580 interchange in San Rafael is near capacity while the Greenbrae interchange is over capacity. Removal of the railroad trestle at Larkspur Landing to accommodate needed lane improvements will help alleviate some congestion.
- Left turns from both Andersen Drive and the prison west gate onto East Sir Francis Drake operate at Level of Service (LOS) F. Both intersections qualify for signalization although there are not funds available to do so at this time. The Main Street/580 interchange operates at LOS B and is not in need of improvements at this time.
- San Rafael is looking at a connection that would connect E. Francisco Blvd. with Andersen Drive across 580 between Shoreline Parkway (Home Depot) and the CMSA sewer plant with no interchange.

Art Brook also discussed options being evaluated for traffic flow improvements through the Greenbrae interchange including a variety of lane-addition projects,

ramp removal and reconfiguration, and off-freeway improvements such as constructing a new road over Corte Madera Creek in the vicinity of the railroad bridge. Adding extra lanes to the Greenbrae interchange poses significant challenges because most of it is an elevated structure and therefore more expensive to widen and Caltrans would require ramp metering lights. Three of the seven scenarios show promise and will be presented to the Congestion Management Agency for consideration and initiation of a Project Study Report.

Comments

- What about other studies and other creek crossings? *There are no other studies looking at alternative creek crossings.*
- If Andersen was signalized, how would LOS improve? *It would be necessary to conduct an analysis of that, but it probably would improve dramatically. However, Caltrans may have concerns with a potential issue of backing up traffic onto 580.*
- Main Street should be a dead end. Nobody on Main Street has a driveway so when one backs out of their garage, it's directly into the street.
- Traffic to the prison through the village currently occurs during the three peak periods which don't coincide with normal peak periods.
- The current roadway improvements proposed would support additional traffic from San Quentin.
- Bicycle planning needs to be included in all plan alternatives.
- Funding has been applied for to rehabilitate the tunnel between San Rafael and Larkspur for bicycle/pedestrian use.

Ferry Opportunities

Lisa Klairmont and Veronica Sanchez of the Water Transit Authority spoke on the status of the Authority's planning efforts. The Authority was formed to look at transportation opportunities on the water. Both Al Boro and Joan Lundstrom are on the Board.

WTA is currently evaluating ferry terminal options which in the North Bay includes Larkspur Landing (existing), the Marin Rod and Gun Club, Gness Field, and the Port Sonoma Marina. San Quentin is not currently under consideration, but the WTA will continue to work with local and regional transit agencies to evaluate a new ferry site in this area. The WTA will continue to actively

participate in this planning process should the opportunity for reusing the site arise. Recommended terminal locations and potential routes will be brought before the WTA Board by August and then to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission in September.

Ideally, a system of seamless connections such as those found in Seattle and New York City are envisioned and include recreational routes as well such as to Angel Island, Fort Baker, and Alcatraz. Funding would come from State and federal sources as well as a \$1.00 bridge toll increase. The San Quentin site would offer several advantages over the current terminal at Larkspur including minimized dredging expenses, less erosion to the shoreline, and a 10-15 minute reduction in trip time to San Francisco. On the other hand, Sonoma County has stated that they don't see the San Quentin site as viable because it won't relieve traffic for them and doesn't provide a visitor link to Napa. Travel times to San Francisco from Port Sonoma Marina would be considerably longer than from San Quentin, even factoring in a train ride to San Quentin.

The Larkspur terminal functions mainly as a commuter hub with over 90% of riders arriving by single-occupant vehicle. The actual terminal occupies about 1-2 acres while the parking lot is 10 acres with 1,500 spaces.

Comments:

- Intermodality is the key by bringing North Bay transit to this location – nobody is going to go to Port Sonoma Marina.
- What can be done in the near term? *The danger of doing short-term solutions is that they can preclude implementation of long-term solutions.*
- The ridership survey is evaluating whether there will be sufficient ridership and cost-effective.
- What about connections to the East Bay? *There is not sufficient projected ridership because of significantly dispersed destinations.*
- Are airport connections under consideration? *They are not because other transit proposals (such as BART) dilute ridership potential.*

Rail Opportunities

Lillian Hames of Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) and Justin Fox of Wilbur Smith Associates discussed current status of the rail study between Cloverdale and San Rafael with a potential extension to San Quentin.

- The current system proposal would include 15 stations along the route, four of which would be in Marin County (excluding San Quentin).
- Current analysis includes necessary right-of-way improvements, siting of a maintenance facility, and inclusion of a parallel bike/pedestrian path along the route.
- Running buses along the route could be cheaper however freight use of the tracks north of the Ignacio wye precludes paving the right of way.
- There are potential noise issues with running trains, some of which is dependent on the type of locomotive used. Traditional diesel locomotives with attached rolling stock are noisier than modern self-propelled units. Since it is envisioned as a commuter service, noise at night would not be an issue.
- If funding were secured shortly, trackway improvements and station construction could be completed so that service could commence between 2005 and 2007. It takes approximately two years to take delivery of rail vehicles from the time they are ordered.
- Initial ridership estimates figure 5,000 per day.
- The north-south bike/pedestrian corridor could be accommodated in most places along the tracks and would create a 70+ mile bikeway.
- Marin County has contracted to evaluate options for extending the line to San Quentin. Four different alignment alternatives were considered, all of which send the extension out the north side of the ridge and crossing over/under to San Quentin at East Sir Francis Drake Blvd. and Andersen Drive.
- One of the biggest cost increases from going to San Quentin would be constructing an elevated structure through downtown San Rafael.
- Wilbur Smith Associates will be presenting a detailed analysis to the SMART commission on May 15.

Comments:

What acreage is needed for a train station? *Two acres are needed for the terminal plus additional parking. With a ferry terminal, parking need could be reduced and shared with the ferry terminal.*

Next Steps

- Committee members will be surveyed shortly to determine the best date for the mixed-use communities tour (May 18, June 1, June 8).
- Evaluate the current collection of photos for completeness and take photos for missing items. Identify buildings by number (keyed to master list) and post on web site. Use to enhance historic preservation discussion.
- Bring a large copy of the topic schedule next time.
- Review the 1991 EIR for additional historic information.

Next Meeting: 6:00, Wednesday, June 12, 2002, San Rafael Corporate Center