



MEMORANDUM

to Nieves Castro, Project Manager, Caltrans District 3 Planning

from Joan Chaplick and Nicole Lewis, MIG, Inc.

re SR 99 Soundwall Community Safety and Enhancement Project
August 18, 2010 Meeting Summary

date August 23, 2010

Participants

Terri Bridges, Caltrans Headquarters
Larry Brohman, Caltrans District 3 Planning
Nieves Castro, Caltrans District 3 Planning
Bobbe Dworkis, Sacramento County Neighborhood Services
Eva Gordon, Caltrans Right of Way - Excess Lands
Hilary Gould, Sacramento County Neighborhood Services
Rusty Grout, Caltrans District 3 Maintenance
Ray Lopez, Caltrans District 3 Maintenance
Khaalid Muttaqi, City of Sacramento Neighborhood Services
Jacob Pace, Caltrans District 3 Surveys
John Wells, Caltrans District 3 Maintenance
Joan Chaplick, MIG Inc.
Nicole Lewis, MIG Inc.

Meeting Purpose and Outcomes

Nieves Castro opened the meeting, made welcoming remarks, and invited a round of introductions. She then turned it over to Joan Chaplick who reviewed the meeting's agenda and intended meeting outcomes. Joan also briefly reviewed overall project goals and the current status of activities for new participants and members of the team.

The last Project Team meeting took place in April. The overall purpose of the meeting is to get the Team back on the same page after a break in project activity. Key points of discussion include project outreach, including development of a guide for other Caltrans Districts interested in selling excess lands to improve safety and enhance conditions in local communities. The contract for MIG's involvement in Caltrans stakeholder and community outreach expires on February 28, 2011, which creates a funding constraint for when this work must be complete.

Project Status, Key Meetings and Timeline

Eva Gordon reported on overall project status. Caltrans project team members recently met with the Legal Department to determine how the agency can legally turn this property over to new owners. Jacob Pace (in attendance) will complete legal surveying of the properties and then Eva will create the contracts. In order for restrictions to transfer with the property, Caltrans will have to create a memorandum of understanding or memorandum of contract – a summary of key points in the contract document. This will be recorded before the Director's deed is recorded.

The contract used for this is the basic contract for selling excess lands. The Legal Department is on board. However, the timeline for the project has been delayed and, at this point, the project schedule hinges on Jacob's work.

The day after Caltrans installs fencing to secure property Eva will record the deed. This will make new property owners legally responsible for the land as soon as Caltrans has installed fencing. For this reason, Eva and Rusty confirmed that Caltrans will need to establish a good estimate of the number of parcels and manpower it will take to install fencing in a timely manner and be prepared to do so once the deed is recorded with the County. Also, Eva must be able to record the deed the day after the fence is installed.

Eva reported that, as a result of surveying that has taken place to date, there are two fewer properties noted in the Phase 1 area. The actual number of properties has not changed. However, two of the properties in this area had multiple Assessor's Property Numbers (APN).

The team has made contact with 5 people out of 9 Phase 1 properties. There are four instances of foreclosure or where other issues exist that complicate the possibility of property transfer. Caltrans has determined that if properties are bank-owned, Caltrans will not deal with them until the property has been transferred, since this is unlikely to be a priority for the banks. This decision not to work with the banks won't stop Caltrans from fencing property or from transferring adjacent properties.

Update on Property Surveying and Final Property Configurations

Joan welcomed Jacob Pace from Caltrans Surveying, who is instrumental in ensuring property surveys take place in as timely a fashion as possible. Jacob reported on the status of property surveying and discussed the step of determining final property configurations.

For Phase 1, some surveying work is complete. Based on the work that has been done, Jacob has been able to identify the soundwall and property lines with reasonable accuracy. Rusty confirmed that the property lines identified by Jacob to date are accurate enough to use for this project moving forward.

There is no surveying currently taking place. Surveying has stopped since all resources are being directed to construction activities. Jacob wants to continue surveying phase by phase. The goal is

to be as efficient as possible and to focus on phases where we have achieved property owner buy-in. In other words, surveys will be done as needed.

Jacob shared that Caltrans needs to be very specific in describing the property it is transferring. He writes up the legal deed that is submitted to the County, so it is important that he knows exactly what Caltrans is selling. When Jacob gets to the point that he can no longer advance his work on this without surveying, he will request that his team continue.

For Caltrans to use resources efficiently, it needs some preliminary guidance on plans for the future of some of these properties. There are some remaining questions about where to put property lines in Phase 1, and these need to be answered before moving forward.

The Caltrans team clarified for Khaalid Muttaqi, the new City representative for the project, that all Phase 1 properties are located in the City. Phase 1 of the project area is a traditional lot and block area. When the highway was built, this grid was essentially severed. Now, roads extend to the soundwall and then dead-end. The City is an owner of public rights of way in this area. Procedurally, Caltrans needs to have an official letter from the City indicating whether they want to reject all state right of way or if they are interested in some parts.

Eva recalled that, during the initial tour of the project area, the City expressed that it did not want to get involved in purchase or maintenance of the properties. At the same time, with turn-arounds at the ends of alleys, it may not be easy to convey this property to private owners. The initial thought was to put the fence line at the center line of the alley, and convey the alleyway itself to the property owners.

Joan noted this should be called out as an important issue in the guide MIG will develop for conducting similar projects in other locations.

One of the next steps for Phase 1 is to determine whether the City wants to purchase responsibility for some portions or not. Joan recommended a focused meeting with key City representatives and Caltrans staff. Khaalid confirmed that this would require the input of City staff in a couple of different departments. Caltrans staff could facilitate the discussion. Nieves will schedule the meeting once Khaalid has identified who from the City needs to be present. Eva, Jacob, John or Rusty, and Nieves would likely attend.

Joan asked Rusty, John and Ray if there were any particular properties that in their experience could be of value to the City for murals, mini-parks, etc. They did not identify any properties.

Upcoming Outreach Needs and Community Meeting

Joan recapped that the team is planning to hold a community meeting for the project. The purpose of the community meeting will be to inform property owners about the process, the benefits of participating in the project, and to identify what needs to happen next.

The estimated date for the meeting continues to change. October is now the month suggested. Project team members identified the week of October 25th as the preferred week to hold the meeting, with a start time of 6:30 or 7:00 pm. Fruitridge Community Center remains the preferred location. Access to property owners will be prioritized in identifying an alternative location. Childcare and food will be available.

Property owners from all project phases will be encouraged to attend the meeting. Phase 3 participation is the most critical. One of the goals is to time the community meeting to correspond with Phase 3 project work, though this may not be possible.

All key project team members, including City and County representatives, should be available to attend. Elected officials should be notified once the meeting date is set. The group brainstormed a more complete list of potential meeting participants during an earlier meeting, which MIG will share with the group.

Project team members recommended that meeting invitations and materials not be too "official". A double-mailer was suggested as part of meeting outreach. Materials to prepare for the meeting include a hand-out illustrating project benefits, visualizations of possible improvements, and maps of the project area. The project team may wish to prepare a PowerPoint for the meeting also.

Development of Outreach Guide

As part of MIG's work for this task order, Joan and Nicole will work with team members to develop a guide based on the experience of this project. The guide will help step other Caltrans districts and staff through the process of selling excess lands to improve safety and conditions in local neighborhoods. This is envisioned to be a Caltrans product of value to communities and districts statewide where similar problems exist. The guide will not be a technical reference for all internal Caltrans activity required as part of this process, but it will identify key issues and obstacles that this process has addressed along the way. The guide will also identify the key players that should be involved.

Jacob Pace talked at length about the initial resistance that this project encountered and about the true benefits of this project for both Caltrans and the community. He described this process as "completely different" than the way Caltrans historically addressed excess land issues. According to Jacob, complete Caltrans control over excess lands limits the Agency's ability to help the community address issues such as vagrancy, illegal dumping and other criminal activity. In effect, according to Jacob, Caltrans doesn't own excess lands; it owns excess rights to these lands.

Team members were very receptive to Jacob's comments, and Caltrans staff agreed that they represented their own perspective on the matter. Meeting participants suggested that a brochure with this organizational perspective, as articulated by Caltrans staff (key quotes, etc.), would be a very good resource to share with the community and other people at Caltrans.

Next Steps and Next Meeting

Team members identified the following next steps and action items to take place in advance of the next team meeting:

- Determine whether the City of Sacramento wishes to purchase rights to select properties in Phase 1 so property configurations can be completed.
 - Identify who from the City should meet with Caltrans staff to determine whether it is interested in purchasing Phase 1 excess lands (Khaalid)
 - Schedule meeting with Caltrans and City representatives once City stakeholders are identified (Nieves)
- Secure an appropriate venue for the community meeting for a date within the preferred time period (MIG)
- Send Team the list of project stakeholders and potential community meeting participants developed during previous team meeting (MIG)
- Update/correct project schedule and post to website. (MIG)
- Develop a document/brochure listing Caltrans organizational perspectives for Hilary to use as part of his outreach (MIG)

Next meeting date: Tuesday, September 21st, 10am to 12pm. Location: Caltrans - 2379 Gateway Oaks Drive, Sacramento, CA 95833 Conference Room. The meeting agenda will include an update on project status and work to prepare for the community meeting (as of August 24th, the community meeting is scheduled to take place on Monday, October 25th, 2010 at the Fruitridge Community Center).