



## MEMORANDUM

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to Nieves Castro, Project Manager, Caltrans District 3 Planning

from Joan Chaplick, Public Involvement Specialist, MIG, Inc.

re SR 99 Soundwall Community Safety and Enhancement Project  
December 15, 2010 Meeting Summary

date December 27, 2010

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### Participants

Larry Brohman, Caltrans District 3 Planning  
Nieves Castro, Caltrans District 3 Planning (by telephone)  
Bobbe Dworkis, Sacramento County Neighborhood Services  
Eva-Marie Gordon, Caltrans Excess Lands  
Hilary Gould, Sacramento County Neighborhood Services  
Rusty Grout, Caltrans District 3 Maintenance  
Ray Lopez, Caltrans District 3 Maintenance  
Dave Thieboux, Caltrans District 3 Surveying  
Joan Chaplick, MIG Inc.  
Nicole Lewis, MIG Inc.

### Meeting Purpose and Outcomes

Joan Chaplick welcomed meeting participants and invited a round of introductions. The purpose of the meeting was to share project updates with the team; discuss project outreach, including plans for the upcoming community meeting and targeted outreach, as needed; and to come to agreement on the approach for the project guide for other districts.

### Project Update/Debrief of Meeting with Management

Eva-Marie Gordon sent letters out mid-November, giving all property owners updated information about the project. The owner also informed owners of the new cost of the underlying fee (\$1.00).

In the letter, Eva noted that the existing trees on the property to be transferred were an important concern and source of discussion during the October 25 community meeting. Property owners were informed that all unhealthy and unsafe trees will be removed. Owners were also told that all healthy, remaining trees will be removed unless they request otherwise. Owners have until this Friday (December 17) to respond. Of the roughly 17 responses, half have responded with a request to remove the trees and half have requested to keep the trees.

Nieves Castro then shared information from their meeting with **Steve last name** and Jeff Pulverman. Steve asked for an inventory of healthy trees and a cost estimate of how much they will cost to remove.

Rusty Grout reported that contracting issue is a very large issue in terms of removing trees. It's not possible to get a contract through Caltrans in less than 6 months. If Steve can get an allowance, he will request an emergency contract.

Rusty reported an estimated cost of \$600 per tree, including grinding stumps and removing the tree and large debris. However, this is based on verbal bids provided by three contractors. With 311 trees to remove, Rusty plans to round up his request to \$250,000 since once he has funding authorized, he cannot request additional money. While not all trees will be removed, he assumes that trees may require extra effort due to their location so his cost estimate has to anticipate many potential cost variables.

Rusty noted that it will be critical to complete contracting and related work in a timely fashion via an emergency contract in order to keep to the project timeline. The further into spring this work moves, the more chance there is for bird nesting to create conflicts for tree removal. Nesting activity can shut down even the biggest construction projects.

Dave Thiebeaux ensured the team that the Survey Team is making this project a high priority. He expects Phase 1 deeds to be delivered by next week.

Eva has worked with Jacob Pace to update the project timeline. Phase 3 is now second priority. She has also combined the steps of appraisal and contract signing as one step in the process on the project timeline. Caltrans does not have to conduct formal appraisals of the property.

Nieves reported that this project may be included in the transition binder for the new governor. In the binder, each Department highlights key activities. Eva will follow up with Steve and Jeff. Nieves will also brief Headquarters, which may result in a change to the project timeline. She is preparing a project fact sheet for the briefing.

Eva had a meeting with right-of-way agents and managers working on soundwall construction on Highway 50, east of Watt Avenue (Rosemont). She discussed the Highway 99 project and how project issues are being resolved. As a result of their conversation with Eva, the Highway 50 project team is extending the property fences all the way to the soundwall to avoid problems similar to those experienced along Highway 99. Property owners recognize that the State still holds an easement for soundwall maintenance etc.

Eva shared that there has been a concern regarding property taxes and whether selling the land in question would generate a new tax assessment for the whole property. This would only be critical for pre-proposition 13 properties.

Eva and Bobbe Dworkis have been working with the County assessor's office, and have confirmed with the assessor elect that, with the \$1 underlying fee as the assessed value, property taxes will go up one penny. However, this does not include assessment of fees on the part of the school district and other special districts, which may go up as a result of the exchange of the property. Bobbe is working to collect more information about this. The assessor will give Bobbe a letter next week providing information on the matter. Eva will include this letter in all sales packets, and Hilary may include in his outreach packet also.

Rusty informed the group that he is initiating homeless camp removal prior to removing the trees. Inevitably, this will have to be done twice. This will be a major undertaking but it is important to do now so Caltrans has a smaller task when it comes time to remove homeless camps again, prior to fencing and transferring the property. District 3 plans to bring in HazMat at the same time.

### **Outreach Update, Community Meeting and Future Outreach**

Hilary reported that door-to-door outreach is business as usual, with the exception of the high-end avenues after Frank Court. The project timeline has been stretched out so far that it's a bit difficult to reach out to property owners in later project phases. Hilary requested direction on whether or not to proceed in these areas at this stage. The team confirmed that he should begin/continue outreach in this area, particularly once the community meeting date is set.

Hilary noted that we have over-inundated the community with information, to a degree. The team agreed but acknowledged the lessons learned here and the role of this project as a pilot for future efforts. Related lessons learned are noted in the following section.

The team then returned to discussion of having another community meeting in January. The need for a second meeting was based on the assumption that the team would develop answers to key community questions and concerns to share, which it has. Possible dates were discussed.

New community meeting topics include:

- Reiterating the \$1 cost of the underlying fee
- The process and answers related to tree and debris removal
- Answers related to property taxes and the assessment of other fees.

In addition, phase 1 property owners may have deeds to sign at the community meeting.

## Project Guide for Other Districts

The team then turned to the topic of developing a project guide for other districts, discussing lessons learned and messages important to convey to other Caltrans districts initiating a similar process. Comments included the following:

### *Process and Partners*

- This process works best when agency and local partners are involved.
- Involve local neighborhood services departments, when possible. Not every jurisdiction has a neighborhood services department, which means local partners may have perspectives and approaches that vary project by project.
- Be responsive to community concerns that arise during the project.
- Identify everyone who will be impacted by the project and orient them.
- Be respectful that law enforcement will likely not attend project team meetings due to limited resources, but keep them informed.
- Develop a project work plan up front to help ensure that the project can be resourced and delivered on time. Specifying input, estimates and duration will help direct staff.
- Get the County assessor involved from the start.
- "Anticipate what you can't anticipate."

### *Project Cost-Effectiveness*

- This is a solution supports a more effective use of resources.
- The project saves money for Caltrans, California Highway Patrol (security enforcement is the responsibility of CHP) and can potentially reduce cost for local governments.
- Consider merging parcels into one so property owners are not taxed twice.

### *Key Issues*

- Key issues include maintenance/removal of existing trees, fencing, and surveying and cost of property.
- The homeless camp removal that is necessary prior to removing any trees is major undertaking. Many communities will have this same issue in the same size and concern.

### *Community Outreach and Communications*

- Touch base with local elected officials to help get local people involved. Do this before beginning outreach.
- Involving an employee that lives in the project area is a huge plus in terms of developing good rapport with the community.
- Don't start public outreach until key issues (property cost, fencing, tree removal, taxes, etc) are addressed or resolved.
- Make sure a good majority of property surveys are complete before beginning outreach. Outreach letters are an important way of providing all tenants and property owners information in the mail.
- Bringing in neighborhood associations is of great benefit.
- In this case, the County didn't have associations in the area but having a community liaison conduct door-to-door outreach was critical.

### *Project Cost and Responsibility*

- The cost of excess lands issues are generally covered by Right of Way. However, in this case the cost is the responsibility of Maintenance.
- Maintenance spends money now to resolve maintenance problems, which saves money down the road.
- This is a maintenance issue that Right of Way has assisted in resolving.

### *Soundwall Design*

- Communicate with designers in the design phase and encourage them to change design parameters so as not to create gaps. Emphasize to designers up front the issues that can be avoided.

### *Guide Audience*

- Direct the project guide to design teams also.

Joan suggested that MIG conduct follow-up interviews with key team members and partners. Eva has a lot of input related to project process, issues specific to Right of Way, the participation of other divisions, and working with the community at large. She will share this input in writing.

## 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:

- Update the “step-by-step” guide to reflect the change to the surveying and appraisal process (i.e. remove Caltrans surveying from steps identified) (MIG)
- Follow up with County re: special district(s) assessments (Bobbe)
- Provide Hilary and the Team with the lists of owners who are “in” and “out” for both property purchase and tree removal (Eva)
- Produce and distribute a mailer/postcard with community meeting information (MIG)
- Update the project website with community meeting announcement and other materials as needed (MIG)
- Produce materials for community meeting, including an updated slideshow (MIG)
- Schedule interviews with key project members (MIG)
- Provide written comments for project guide for other districts (Eva)
- Outline and draft project guide (MIG)

**Next meeting date:** Wednesday, January 12, 1:30 - 3:00pm. Caltrans District 3, 2379 Gateway Oaks Drive, Sacramento The meeting agenda will include preparation for the community outreach meeting, which is scheduled for January 26 at Pacific Elementary.