



CITY ADMINISTRATION

MEMORANDUM

July 20, 2016

TO: Honorable Mayor Way and City Councilmembers

FROM: Dan Schwarz, City Manager

SUBJECT: Summary and Follow-Up to July 13, 2016 Community Meeting About Restriping and Reconfiguration on Magnolia Avenue

At a community meeting held on July 13, 2016, staff provided information concerning the current restriping and reconfiguration of northbound Magnolia Avenue including and north of its intersection with Bon Air Road. Mayor Way and Vice-Mayor Haroff attended the meeting on behalf of the Council. Public Works Director Julian Skinner gave a slide presentation, which was followed by a question and answer period.

As a reminder of the Magnolia Avenue project and its status, I have attached a copy of the text on our webpage about it. A copy of the Marin IJ article about the meeting is also attached.

As follow-up from the meeting, I want to make the Council aware of staff's anticipated activities in the coming months related to this project.

- At the Council's August 17, 2016 meeting, as an informational item on the business calendar, staff will provide an overview and status update of the Bon Air Bridge and all of its mitigation projects. Staff is also preparing a "landing page" on the City's website where residents can find information and links about the Bridge and the mitigation projects.
- The reconfiguration of Magnolia Avenue stems from a requirement of the City's Regional Water Quality Control Board Clean Water Act (401) Permit for the bridge to offset its impervious surface (approximately 100,000 square feet). Approximately 11% of this offset is achieved by expanding the median in this portion of Magnolia Avenue – an expansion that necessitates the restriping and reconfiguration. The project team did not identify alternatives to realize this final

11%. Staff will be working with the project team to determine if alternatives exist, and, if they do exist, what is the fiscal impact to the City to substitute the alternative for the proposed reconfiguration.

- Staff anticipates commissioning an analysis of traffic conditions in the reconfigured portion of Magnolia Avenue for comparison to the conditions prior to implementation. Traffic counts will be taken after the new school year begins; staff's goal is to have the analysis completed in September or October.
- Staff anticipates presenting the assessment of the impact of the reconfiguration, as well as any information about viable alternatives to realize the final 11% of surface offset, no later than November.

In addition to these activities, staff will be meeting with residents and business owners to evaluate specific issues and concerns that have arisen since the project began.

Larkspur residents assail Magnolia paving project, Bon Air Bridge design

Residents: Paving plan is a traffic nightmare

By Adrian Rodriguez, Marin Independent Journal

Thursday, July 14, 2016



An overflow crowd packed a Larkspur forum this week to pressure city officials to change plans for a paving project they say has forced a traffic nightmare.

Residents last month lodged complaints with the city and circulated a petition to dispute the project, prompting officials to call the Wednesday meeting. Residents said the plan to slim a block and a half of Magnolia Avenue to one lane each way — as part of the environmental mitigation of the bigger Bon Air Bridge rebuild — wasn't properly vetted and they were blindsided when construction started this spring.

“How did we get this far without anyone in the city knowing?” resident Barbara Freitas said.

The mood was tense in the meeting room at the Central Marin police station.

Mayor Catherine Way explained the meeting was to provide an overview of the bridge rebuild, a \$16 million project, and the mitigation projects that are part of it. No decisions were to be made.

The standing-room-only crowd of more than 100 — some sitting on the floor, on tables, while others stood pressed against the wall, spilling into the lobby — interrupted, saying, “no, no, no,” shouting “what?” and “why?” and saying they called for a public hearing and wanted action.

Councilman Kevin Haroff said he understood the frustration with the Magnolia project.

“We have not done a good enough job to make sure that we are getting this right. We need to involve the public in a way that we have not,” he said. “That’s the reason for this. ... This is not just for us to tell you the things that are being done. This is for us to make sure that we have the involvement of the community.”

The 58-year-old bridge, which over the past year has seen some utility work, is set to be completely rebuilt and significantly widened to accommodate a 10-foot-wide multiuse path and 5-foot-wide bicycle lanes, said Julian Skinner, public works director.

It is expected to go out to bid this fall with construction beginning next spring and continuing for three to four years.

The wider bridge would create a larger impervious area above Corte Madera Creek.

As required by the state, city officials had to plan several mitigation measures, including widening the median on Magnolia and removing some of the existing asphalt. That would create a larger area for stormwater runoff. The city obtained permits from the state in 2014 and 2015.

The road would be reduced to one lane each way from Bon Air Road north to just past Dartmouth Drive.

Regardless of the size of the bridge, a rebuild requires these mitigations, Skinner said. The state specifically requires that the work be done on Magnolia, due to its proximity to the bridge, he said.

Skinner also explained that traffic flow is most affected by how the intersections are controlled, not how many lanes there are.

After a public outcry, city officials decided to place temporary paint on Magnolia, Skinner said.

“We can observe it and see if what’s in the traffic (study) is actually what’s going to occur,” he said, explaining the city would have consultants conduct a traffic count again in the fall.

Rick Slavin, who lives in the Skylark Apartments, said nearly 900 cars come down Skylark Drive, and a right turn southbound on Magnolia into one lane didn't make sense.

"You're funneling four lanes into one lane," he said, including lanes southbound on Magnolia, north of the intersection. "Is there something wrong with that?"

Overall, the community was confused with the host of projects, including one by the county of Marin at Marin General Hospital.

"At what point does the county and the city work together?" asked resident Samuel Noily. "We pay taxes to the county for the city, and I want to know, where is the confluence of jurisdictions ... for the benefit of us?"

As for the bridge, residents asked why it couldn't be redesigned to be more narrow with less space dedicated to bicycles and/or the multiuse path.

City Manager Dan Schwarz said the project planning began in 2006, and the city has had several public meetings.

"We are up against a deadline," Schwarz said. "To re-engineer, redesign the bridge jeopardizes \$20 million."

Ron Arlas, who was on the City Council when it voted for the project, said "that is a totally different design than what we approved," which sparked commotion and an exchange with Schwarz.

"The entire bridge width is the same that you approved," said Schwartz, saying he didn't appreciate the claim. "What is on the bridge is different, but the width is the same."

City officials will plan a subsequent meeting.

For more information on the Magnolia Avenue project, go to cityoflarkspur.org/623/Magnolia-Ave-Project. Check the city's website for updates on the Bon Air Bridge rebuild.

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Magnolia Ave Project

The City of Larkspur hosted a community meeting on Wednesday, July 13, at 6:30 pm in the Community Room at the Central Marin Police Authority at 250 Doherty Dr. A copy of the meeting presentation can be found [here](#). The meeting shared information about the Magnolia Avenue Water Quality Facilities Project's proposal to eliminate one of two existing travel lanes in each direction on Magnolia Avenue between Bon Air Road and Dartmouth Drive/ Skylark Drive. Staff also provided an update on the Bon Air Bridge Replacement project, for which the Magnolia Avenue project is a mitigation measure.

The Bon Air Bridge Replacement Project's Section 401 Permit issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Board includes a requirement to compensate for the impervious surfaces on and around the new bridge with low impact development facilities on Magnolia Avenue. The Project Team investigated and designed a series of improvements to Magnolia Avenue to meet this requirement, including replacing the second travel lanes with landscaping. A traffic analysis was completed to assess the impact the lane reduction would have on traffic. The traffic analysis can be found [here](#).

The Magnolia Avenue project is scheduled to take place next year. With the recent paving work on northbound Magnolia Avenue to improve the road, the City paved only the one lane scheduled to remain after next year's Magnolia Avenue project so as not to spend money paving a lane scheduled to be removed. Next week, this northbound segment of Magnolia will be striped for one travel lane between Bon Air Road and Dartmouth Drive/Skylark Drive, but the ultimate removal of the second lane of asphalt is not scheduled until the Magnolia Avenue project begins next year.

Until work begins on the Magnolia Avenue project, the City is using temporary traffic paint in lieu of permanent thermoplastic striping on this segment. Staff will continue to engage the public and solicit feedback on performance of the one lane configuration before ultimately finalizing the project plans for bid next year.



Supporting Documents

- [Magnolia Ave Workshop Presentation 07-13-16](#)
- [Magnolia Traffic Analysis 2016](#)
- [Magnolia Traffic Analysis Configuration](#)
- [Magnolia Reconfiguration Diagram](#)
- [Magnolia Lane Reduction Exhibit](#)