

Date: March 11, 2023

To: Petaluma Mayor McDonnell, Vice Mayor Cader Thompson, and Council Members Barnacle, Healy, Nau, PoceKay, and Shribbs

From: Bill Rinehart

Re: 3/13/23 Workshop Item 1 – City Goals and Priorities

Dear Mr. Mayor and Council Members,

First, a giant “Thank You!” to our City Manager, along with all the Department Leaders, Staff members and past and present City Council members who continue to move these goals forward. The “Goal Setting” city management strategy has been transformational and enabled so many meaningful actions.

It is clear from the staff report that we will always have more priorities than we can accomplish, so I’m writing to recommend that the Historic Trestle Rehabilitation be elevated out of the “Discretionary” category and made a true priority, with hard milestones and real action. It cannot be overstated how this will restore the heart of our city and benefit all of Petaluma.

This continues to get kicked down the road, though it has been on the radar longer than any of the other listed priorities. As described in the staff report, this is a complicated project with many hurdles and will certainly take years to accomplish. Yet the progress report clearly indicates how little has been done. It states that “Staff continues to actively pursue milestones...” However, the only accomplishments seem to be “re-engagement” with previously completed work, and partial completion of a study that is “Critically Important...” It is past time to develop a real action plan. It has now been 10 years since final Plans Specifications, and Estimates were completed and approved by council (March 2013). It is understood that these plans and estimates are outdated, but in the time since this “Priority” was formally adopted, too little has been accomplished.

Please direct staff and allocate budget to achieve the following milestones in FY 23/24:

- Complete timber analysis
- Adopt a Memorandum of Understanding between SMART, the State Lands Commission, and the City of Petaluma to establish ownership details and transfer of title, if needed.
- Obtain as many available grants and State/Federal funds that can provide for design and construction
- Engage a design firm to update Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (team must include a historic preservation/design specialist)
- Identify all required environmental clearances, entitlements, permits (ARMY Corps, DFW, NMFs, MND/CEQA update, etc.) and initiate processes as needed to ensure funding opportunities are not missed due to incomplete permitting
- Leverage the public engagement process that was conducted in 2011-13 and stick to the community guidance that this is to be a “Rehabilitation” of an historic structure, not a value-engineered bridge replacement.

There is no other project that relates to more of the city’s overall goals and priorities, or one that has greater potential to improve our community’s character and reputation as an amazing place to live, work, and visit. This structure served as the backbone infrastructure that enabled our region’s industry to prosper, and to connect with the entire world. It is likely that no single structure contributed more to the economic prosperity of Petaluma and Sonoma County. Transforming it from its embarrassing state of neglect into a lively and attractive waterfront promenade can be your legacy!

Thank you,

Bill Rinehart