

From: Rob Kelly [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, January 13, 2024 7:03 AM
To: Tom Ramsey <tramsey@Piedmont.ca.gov>; Jennifer Long <jlong@Piedmont.ca.gov>; Conna McCarthy <cmccarthy@piedmont.ca.gov>; Betsy Andersen <bandersen@piedmont.ca.gov>; Jen Cavanaugh <jcavanaugh@piedmont.ca.gov>
Subject: item #3 January 16th meeting

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Dear Council Members,

I am planning on attending the next city council meeting regarding the replacement bridge at lower Piedmont Park. I encourage you to visit the site to see the bridge first hand.

Public works and the planning department have failed to take into account any citizen input. All neighbor letters are strongly opposed to the new bridge design and would prefer repair/ replacement of the original bridge. The cost for the replacement could be 1/20th the cost of the new bridge. I have measured and priced all the wood components of the existing bridge which total less than \$7k.

Enclosed are the 9 letters that the planning department received regarding the bridge design.

Thank You,

--
Rob Kelly
(510) [REDACTED]
www.houzz.com/projects/users/kelly_abramson_architecture

Director Design Review Application Comment Form
Please submit this form by 4:30 p.m. December 21, 2023

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Your comments regarding the proposed construction and its effect on your property are welcome. You may submit comments in writing by completing this form and returning it to City Hall, 120 Vista Avenue, by 4:30 p.m. December 21, 2023. Your comments can be mailed to City Hall or submitted electronically to jmuller@piedmont.ca.gov.

Name (please print) Gail Trabish

Address [REDACTED] Piedmont

Telephone Number 570 [REDACTED]

Did you review the plans or discuss the project with the applicant? Yes No X

I/We support the application for design review: Yes No

Comments: I have looked at the plans posted on the bridge in the Piedmont Park and believe you should proceed with Robb's \$20K alternative. Why pay \$216K. Doesn't the city have better use for the money?

Signature Gail Trabish Date 12/11/23

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Name (please print) Rick Rosenbaum

Address [REDACTED]

Telephone Number [REDACTED] sbc global.net

Did you review the plans or discuss the project with the applicant? Yes _____ No X

I/We support the application for design review: Yes _____ No X

Comments:

I believe the city should explore less expensive alternatives to replace the existing failing bridge over the very short ~~the~~ span. One such potential alternative has been preliminarily posted at the location of this bridge. \$246,000 seems quite excessive for such a small pedestrian crossing.

Signature

[Signature]

Date 12/11/23

12_10_23

I have concerns about the design of the new Pedestrian Bridge in the lower Piedmont Park and would recommend replacing the existing bridge as-is

Piedmont City Code

The new bridge design does not meet the city's laws regarding land use. Chapter 17 repeatedly requires that new structures preserve the city's heritage, ensure the excellence of design, and comply with the Piedmont design guidelines.

The new bridge fails to meet the city's design guidelines.

Section 4.01.01 requires the preservation of historic structures and resources as well as adaptive re-use of structures.

Section 5.01.01 Compatibility.

The proposed new bridge fails to physically fit and integrate into the local environment. It looks more like a freeway overpass bridge than a quaint wood bridge in the forest.

The scale and massing are out of proportion with the environment. The new bridge is double the length of the exiting bridge. Scale can kill charm. Especially in relation to this tiny creek tributary that is dry almost all of the time.

The material and design of the bridge are not integrated with the environment. The steel and pressure treated materials proposed are industrial in appearance. The bridge has not been designed and the photos from the recommended manufacturer's websites are mostly ugly. A steel bridge could work if it has wood elements and the parts are properly proportioned. In order to get the least expensive solution, the design is left to the lowest bidding contractor. In my 30 years' experience as an architect and builder, the cheapest builders typically build ugly structures.

Replace as-is

1. Most certainly this would be less expensive. I measured all wood parts of the bridge and priced each part. Lumber costs are approximately \$7k based on the enclosed quote from Economy Lumber. Labor for 3 guys for 5 days at \$75/hour would be about \$10k. I would like to re-build this bridge with The Piedmont service crew in fall 2024 at no cost to the city.
2. Replace as-is appearance is more appropriate to the local environment.
3. Existing foundation appears to be in excellent condition. This is visible from below and above. This can be substantiated for re-use by a licensed structural engineer.
4. Bridge is failing due to rotting wood, not for any other reason.
5. This creek tributary is dry almost all of the time. The soils engineer "did not observe significant evidence of recent or incipient... slope instability". Visual inspection indicates that there is no current slope instability at the foundation.

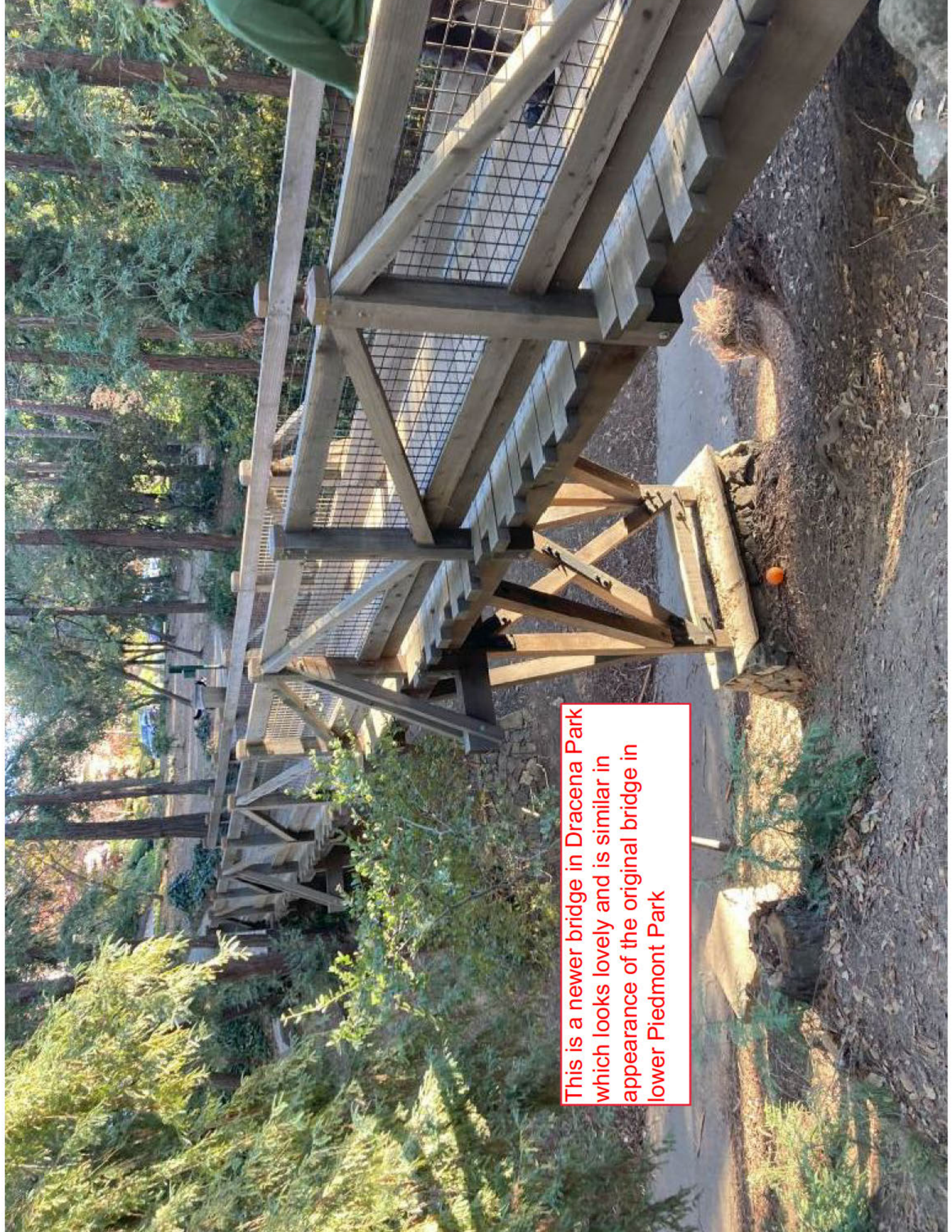
I spoke with the soils engineer, Ben Pappas, who said that repairing the existing bridge was not considered and his soils report applies to the proposed new bridge. Given that the creek is dry

most of the time and underlain by rocky soils, he stated that the likelihood of the bridge falling into the creek with a person getting hurt would be a low probability.

New Bridge

1. Appearance. The existing bridge is cute and charming. This is from the material, design, and scale. The proposed bridge is 28' while the average length of the existing bridge is 14'. The proposed bridge is twice as long as the existing. The proposed bridge is out of scale with the creek and local environment.
2. The design of the new bridge is based on low cost. The design of the new bridge is not specified, only the type of structural system for the new bridge is specified. The actual design and detailing of the bridge is left to the contractor. Given these factors, I don't expect the bridge to look good. In my experience working with low-cost contractors, their goal is to make money, not spend time with concerns about appearances.
3. The material specified for the bridge is steel, which is commercial and industrial in appearance. I would expect this type of bridge at a freeway overpass. The wood decking for the bridge is specified as pressure treated (page 89 of the specifications). This wood is typically not used where it is exposed to view except for lower cost and lower quality projects. None of the finished wood at Dracena Park, the upper Piedmont Park tea garden, wildwood school, Beach school uses this as a finish material.
4. Cost. The lowest bid for the new bridge is \$216,000. These costs include remove and replacing concrete pathway and fencing, new foundations, new steel bridge, craning in this bridge (I don't see how this is possible).

Rob Kelly, architect, Piedmont resident. 510 [REDACTED]

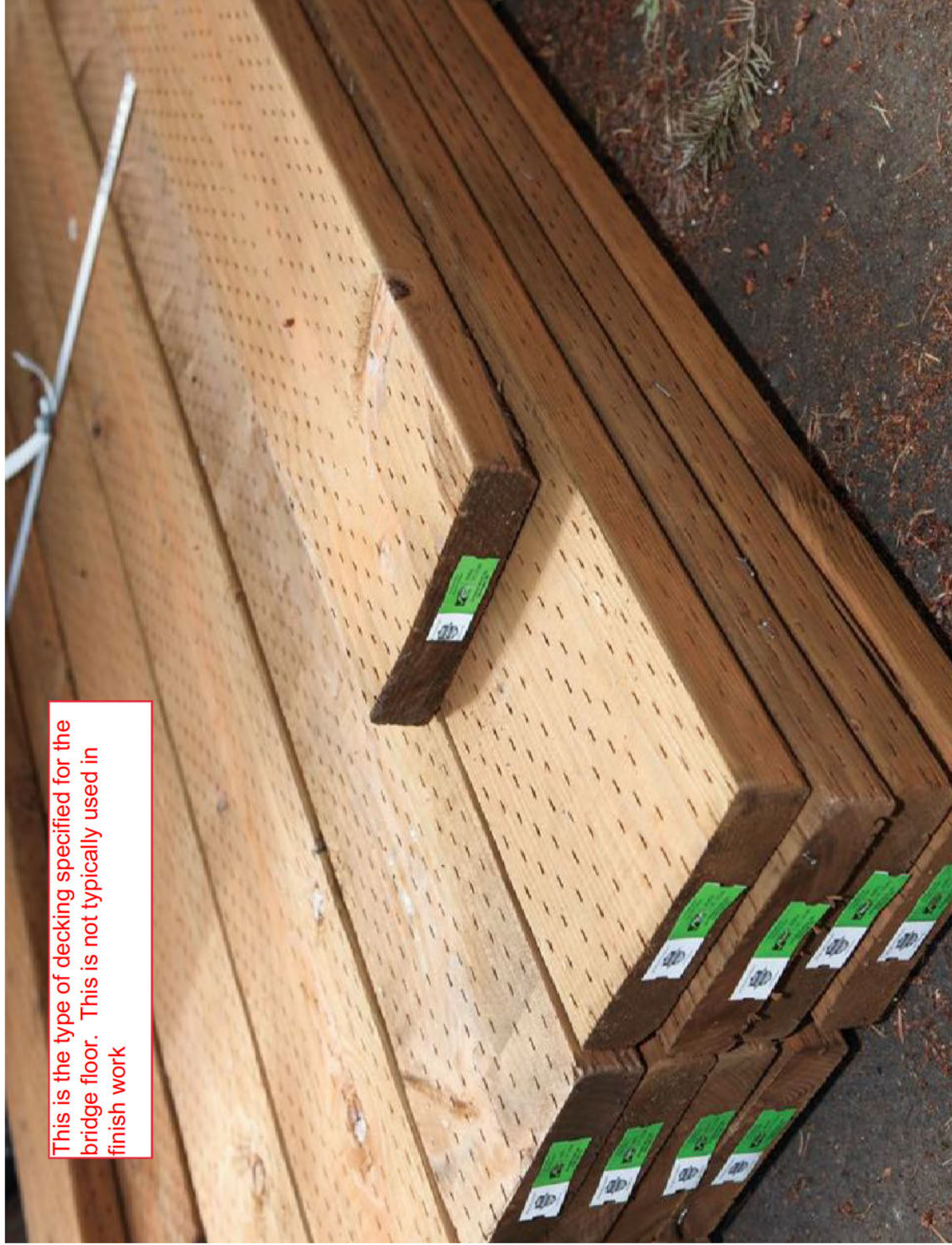


This is a newer bridge in Dracena Park which looks lovely and is similar in appearance of the original bridge in lower Piedmont Park

This is what the new bridge could look like. The actual design is left to the lowest bidding contractor. The bid documents specify that it be this style of bridge, a "1/2 through "H" section with bowstring pratt truss". The decision to use this type of design is its purportedly low cost.



This is the type of decking specified for the bridge floor. This is not typically used in finish work



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Name (please print) Sarah Royce + David Theis
Address [REDACTED], Piedmont
Telephone Number 510 [REDACTED]

Did you review the plans or discuss the project with the applicant? Yes ☐ No ☐

I/We support the application for design review: Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

We support Rob Kelly's design, NOT the "freeway" looking steel structure that the city proposes. The tower cost and the aesthetics of Rob's design make much more sense for the woodsy feel of our park.

Signature

A Royce

Date

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Name (please print) _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Did you review the plans or discuss the project with the applicant? Yes _____ No _____

I/We support the application for design review: Yes _____ No _____

Comments:

Name: Tom Gandesbery

Address: [REDACTED], Piedmont

Telephone: 510 [REDACTED]

RE: **Piedmont Park Bridge over unnamed creek draining to Bushy Dell Creek**

Dear Mr. Muller:

I am writing in regard to the planned replacement of the bridge in Piedmont Park. I am now aware that the City plans to replace this small and quaint wooden bridge with a much larger steel bridge. **I request that the City reconsider this approach and instead repair the existing bridge.**

The cost of this new bridge will be far more than simply replacing what is there now with new wood. The bridge has been in that location for as long as I can remember – at least 20 years - and has functioned just fine. As you are no doubt aware, normal service life of a wooden structure such as this is typically assumed to be 15 years, so this little bridge has had a nice long life. As a result of extraordinary winter flow in the creek, the sides of the bridge were damaged by flotsam leading the City to execute a temporary repair to replace the railings. Thank you for responding to that so quickly!

The current design fits nicely with the scale of the environs and the footings appear to be in good shape. A steel bridge more than twice the length will not fit with the look and feel of this wonderful park and will cost far more than replacing rotten timbers and railings. Furthermore, construction will necessitate a longer and more disruptive construction window in this heavily traveled area. Please feel free to contract me if you would like to discuss this further. I know this bridge like it was in my own backyard as I walk over it nearly every day.

From: Susan Ode [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, December 16, 2023 11:11 AM
To: Joshua Muller
Subject: Dracena Bridge

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I am opposed to replacing the existing pedestrian bridge in Piedmont Park with a steel bridge as proposed.

The steel bridge is very expensive and is less in keeping with the Park neighborhood than a wooden bridge similar to the one in Dracena Park.
A wooden bridge would provide a more natural experience for park walkers at a much lower cost.

Thank you for your consideration.

Susan Ode
[REDACTED]

From: Ronna Abramson [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, December 17, 2023 8:12 PM
To: Joshua Muller
Subject: Pedestrian bridge for Bushy Dell Creek in Piedmont Dog Park

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Dear Piedmont Planning Commissioners:

I am writing to express strong concerns about the plans for a new pedestrian bridge proposed for Bushy Dell Creek in Piedmont Park.

I have been walking across this bridge for 16 years, since moving to Piedmont. We fondly referred to this bridge as the Hobbit Bridge when we crossed it with our young children many years ago.

I was shocked to find that the proposed replacement for this modest wood bridge is a steel structure that is completely incompatible with the park setting. And then on top of that, the cost of more than \$200,000 seems totally ridiculous. I believe a more modest wood bridge would fit in better with the park and would cost substantially less. There are many other things that the city can do with the money saved from scaling back this project to a simple wood replacement bridge.

Thank you,

Ronna Kelly
[REDACTED]

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PLANNING & BUILDING DEPT.
CITY OF PIEDMONT

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Name (please print) Tim O'Reilly & Jen Pahlka

Address [REDACTED]

Telephone Number [REDACTED]

Did you review the plans or discuss the project with the applicant? Yes X No

I/We support the application for design review: Yes No X

Comments:

We walk our dog every morning in Piedmont Park, and cross the bridge in question every day. We believe that the proposed metal bridge would fundamentally change the character of the park. It is completely out of place. The cost of the project also seems excessive - an order of magnitude more than simply replacing the bridge with a wooden span.

Signature Tim O'Reilly Date 12-12-23
Jen Pahlka

Joshua Muller

From: Carol Cohen [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2023 4:26 PM
To: Joshua Muller
Subject: Piedmont Park pedestrian bridge

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We have reviewed the proposal for a new steel bridge and understand the cost to be \$217,000. I don't agree with the plans and especially the cost for this unnecessary bridge. We do understand it needs to be replaced, but why not with a simple wood bridge that will fit in with the surroundings? I'm sure that can be accomplished at a much more reasonable price without the damage to surrounding plants or undue inconvenience to users of the park. Every year it is a bit of a scramble to pay our property taxes and would hope the city would have more fiscal restraint with our tax dollars.

Sincerely,

Carol and Paul Cohen
[REDACTED] Piedmont, CA 94610
(510) [REDACTED]

Joshua Muller

From: Pamela M Schwartz [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, December 21, 2023 7:47 AM
To: Joshua Muller
Subject: Pedestrian bridge for Bushy Dell Creek in Piedmont Dog Park

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Dear Piedmont Planning Commissioners:

I am writing to express strong concerns about the plans for a new pedestrian bridge proposed for Bushy Dell Creek in Piedmont Park.

I have been walking across this bridge with our kids and dogs for 20 plus years, since moving to Piedmont.

I was shocked to find that the proposed replacement for this modest wood bridge is a steel structure that is completely incompatible with the park setting. And then on top of that, the cost of more than \$200,000 seems unnecessary. I believe a more modest wood bridge would fit in better with the park and would cost substantially less. It seems clear that are many other things that the city can do with the money saved from scaling back this project to a simple wood replacement bridge.

Thank you,

Pam Schwartz
[REDACTED]

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Name (please print) Karen Notsund

Address [REDACTED] Ave

Telephone Number 510-[REDACTED]

Did you review the plans or discuss the project with the applicant? Yes ☐ No ☒

I/We support the application for design review: Yes ☐ No ☒

Comments:

I've reviewed the plans sent to me. I do not support the significantly larger + steel design. It's a small bridge used only for pedestrian traffic and I would support a bridge design that is closer to what is currently in place. The current design appears too large for the environment and unnecessary.

Signature Karen Notsund Date 12/21/23