



May 7, 2021

City of Pasadena Design Commission
Attn: Michi Takeda
Hale Building
175 N. Garfield Ave., 2nd Floor
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: Colorado Street Bridge – Suicide Mitigation Enhancement Project

Dear Members of the Design Commission:

Pasadena Heritage members, Board members, Advocacy Committee members and staff have been agonizing over the fencing alternatives mocked up on the Colorado Street Bridge. There is no consensus among us as to an acceptable alternative among those presented, rather the consensus is that none of these options are right. We cannot, therefore, recommend any of the alternatives as presented.

We understand that each of the current options have pros and cons, but we believe all three are too visually impactful and detract from the experience of the Bridge. We were hopeful that the curved mesh lamppost surrounds might provide the least change, but they are simply too visually invasive and change the essential feeling of crossing the Bridge. A straight fence would be preferable, but would require extreme lengthening of the lampposts which puts them out of proportion.

The mesh solutions have less structure, may disappear more, and are shorter in height but are more contemporary and less in keeping with the architecture of the Bridge. During our site walks, we experienced reflectivity problems that may be impossible to avoid and could create dangerous road conditions.

The pickets relate somewhat better to the design elements of the Bridge, are more like what is there now, but create a stacking effect as you travel down the bridge and must be noticeably taller. (It should be noted that the current fence on top of the balustrade is nonhistoric, was designed in the 1990s, has aged well and is not too intrusive, but it is not tall enough to serve as a real deterrent.)

Pasadena Heritage representatives participated in the process to arrive at these options. It was a good process, with community participation at several public meetings and a small task force group that grappled with the details of various options. A vertical barrier fence definitely seemed the best choice to emerge from that process, to be tested by full-size mock-ups installed on the Bridge.

We appreciate that the mock-ups were created and installed as the reality of them in situ has been very instructive and revealing. Seeing how they really look and how they affect the appearance and experience of the Bridge has caused us, and many others responding to the online survey, to

question whether this is the best we can do for the Bridge. We hope you have gone out to see the samples in person as it makes a real difference to experience them on site.

Therefore, we are asking that the community and the Public Works Department take another look at possible options and reconsider whether there are any viable alternatives that would be more compatible with the design and aesthetics of the Colorado Street Bridge, one of Pasadena's most beloved and iconic structures. As members of the public have noted, it will take more than just physical structures to prevent suicides, and those strategies should be discussed in tandem with whatever physical deterrent is to be installed.

Tonight you are being asked to comment on the mock-up choices on display and cast your vote for one alternative or another. We look forward to hearing your comments and opinions, but we ask the Design Commission to consider, rather than voting for one of these options (none of which appears to be the right choice) to instead join us in asking for another look and more consideration to find the best solution. In the end, the result may be that we land back where we are today, but shouldn't we all take the time and effort to try to do better for our historic Bridge, one of the most beautiful bridges in the world? The mock-ups and temporary fencing can stay in place while more study is done, so why not do our very best to see if there is a better option.

Sincerely,



Susan N. Mossman
Executive Director



Andrew Salimian
Preservation Director

cc: Steve Mermell, City Manager
Ara Maloyan, Director of Public Works