



June 8, 2021

Mayor Victor Gordo  
Members of the City Council

### **Colorado Street Bridge Barrier Enhancement Proposals**

The West Pasadena Residents' Association shares the City's concerns about reducing suicides at the Colorado Street Bridge, both for the benefit of the persons contemplating suicide as well as the residents near and below the Bridge.

However, the WPRA is concerned that the City's consultants viewed their role myopically, ignored aesthetics, and failed to fully consider effective solutions that would not ruin one of the City's most-beautiful historic landmarks. As a result, the WPRA requests that the City delay implementation of the current options for suicide-detering Vertical Barrier Enhancements to the Colorado Street Bridge, and continue to conduct an in-depth review of alternatives, including any technologies that could replace the physical barriers, or enhance a reduced height of those barriers.

The Bridge is one of the truly iconic symbols, along with the Rose Bowl and City Hall, of the City of Pasadena. It is a work of art and a treasure to the community, but it would be disfigured and demeaned by implementation of any of these options.

After more than four years of research and outreach, the Department of Public Works and the consultants have presented three options for Vertical Barrier Enhancements to the Bridge. However, there appear to be several flaws to those options.

The goal of the Vertical Barrier was to eliminate suicides from the bridge. Both Public Works and the Consultants have stated that the barriers will not be 100% effective. They estimate 90% effectiveness, but understandably cannot be sure. Further, one of the options is the "picket" option, which the Consultants have said can be scaled. It is unclear, then, why this option was submitted.

All options are vertical only, with some flawed assumptions. The heights presented (eight, nine or ten feet) were essentially assumptions. The only rationale presented was that they assumed that a 6' person could jump 2' and grab a horizontal surface. Plenty of persons can jump higher than 24 inches, particularly with a running start that is possible on a bridge.

Whatever is done to the bridge is most likely a 50+ year decision. The options are described as “reversible”, but given the reported cost estimates in the millions of dollars, there may be no practical way to reverse the barrier installation.

Also, there appears to not have been a substantive discussion about alternatives or enhancements to a lower height barrier by using advanced technological applications including deterrence, surveillance and notification. Vertical barriers alone are often breached (such as the border fence between the U.S. and Mexico).

We respectfully request additional review of options that will meet the critical goal of deterring suicide attempts while protecting Pasadena’s treasured Colorado Street Bridge.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Respectfully,



Dan Beal, President  
For the Board of Directors

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

The WPRA is an all-volunteer organization dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life in southwest Pasadena. We represent 7,000 households, including 1,000 paid members.