

Dear Neighbors,

Thanks to the 50 or so neighbors who attended last night's meeting with Caltrans. On the surface it appeared to be just another of their show and tell meetings with no suggestion of compromise or recognition of our desires. This morning I spoke with Cristina Ferraz who is Caltran's District Division Chief and rather high in the Caltrans food chain. I'll summarize our discussion in a minute, but first for those who were not at the meeting I'll say that Caltrans response to our three main goals were:

- 1) rubberized asphalt both sides all six miles - Caltrans response = NO;
- 2) No work during sleep hours - Caltrans response = NO and
- 3) use of temporary sound barriers - Caltrans response (we have no experience with that and will look into it.)

We had an additional list of questions to which Caltrans provided their "canned" response. Their promise to gather answers to all of our questions and post the answers on their project website is, as of this moment not yet a reality. At the meeting they did show us detailed maps of where the saw cutting and jack hammering will take place. I think these maps will be valuable. Caltrans promised to put them on the website together with a schedule of the dates, hours and locations where work will be performed. They have not been posted as of this message. Look friends, they are going forward. I saw no movement towards delay or modification of their plans. Caltrans' project information site is "www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/580resurfacing"

We did learn that the contractor, O.C. Jones, Inc., will institute a new method of removing damaged concrete which will reduce the amount of Jackhammering. Essentially, they will cut a bad section of concrete into three sections and lift the entire sections out in one piece. The original plan was to break the entire section into small pieces and shovel it away. I see a ray of hope in this development. Contractors are practical and inventive people. Bureaucrats are not. Noise is part of contractors work hazards, but it really doesn't faze them. That O.C.Jones has a suggestion on how to reduce construction noise makes me I think our concerns about noise are receiving a hearing (joke) and the practical ones are trying to do something about it.

As we had thought, 88.5% of the funds for this project are Federal money. This may open a new target for legal review and a new list of politicians for us to bring into this dispute.

Now to a summary of my telephone call with Cristina Ferraz;

- 1) The Caltrans representatives at the meeting last night were not being paid for their time - they volunteered it!
- 2) They were upset with the way I portrayed them, as non-caring bureaucrats working off a set of prepared answers and having neither sympathy nor creativity and certainly no authority. I apologized and said I encouraged their support and creative solutions to construction noise and long term freeway noise. The individuals working for Caltrans see themselves as good guys, looking to help us and want to be treated that way.
- 3) Caltrans receives a request for rubberized asphalt on every project they do. They will do it where they have funds - which they don't for this project.
- 4) We do have the ear of the highest authorities in Caltrans. Cristina gives them a status update on a weekly basis and reports on meetings such as the one last night, the morning after.
- 5) They have never used the portable sound barriers but are willing to give them a try. The sound barrier company called Cristina at 7:00 a.m. this morning, waking her up (ironic) to pitch his product. We will not be spectators to the trial, but will have our ear to the ground for the results.
- 6) Caltrans is willing to set up a conference call between me (and whoever else would like to listen in or participate) Caltrans and the Contractor to discuss small solutions..
- 7) She strongly recommends that we pitch the issue of permanent sound walls to our politicians as that would provide better long term relief than rubberized asphalt.

My thoughts on 1-7

- 1) I appreciate that
- 2) I'd like to believe that we will get better results if we are nice, but to date we have been nice and have received very little other than O.C. Jones modification of construction techniques.
- 3) Great ideas are slow to be recognized. We should keep screaming for Rubberized Asphalt. It may not help us, but it might change Standard Operating Procedures and help other neighborhoods.
- 4) Nice to know we are being heard - its the first step towards action and results.
- 5) This is the first sign of flexibility from Caltrans. They are willing to try something. I encourage the creative minds in our community to come up with practical, inexpensive solutions to construction noise. I plan to sketch out an inexpensive acoustic hood to attach to concrete saws. Perhaps the idea has legs. If anyone has other ideas, lets get them on the table. The portable sound walls don't have to be 200 yards long, they could simply surround the noisy activity in a smaller pod. I know you will have better ideas.
- 6) This is a potential break through, but we must have creative ideas.

7) We tried to create a subcommittee to pursue permanent sound walls at our second meeting and no one was interested. The possibility this suggestion is just bait and switch, but it could also be a clue to a long term solution. It would start with our smarter members getting a hold of the sound barrier study Oakland has for the Rockridge area. This report was generated as a result of the community suit regarding the 4th bore on highway 24.

In my opinion, we are in the positions of having very few pressure points. Twenty members showed at our first public meeting and fifty last night. That is a start but not a mob. Time is short. We don't have funds for litigation and no attorneys have stepped forward with an offer of pro bono work. We can write our politicians and ask that they find the funds for rubberized asphalt. That is simple and might get results. Now that we know 88.5% of the funds are Federal, we can write to our federal politicians. Here are a list of relevant politicians and their addresses as best I can find.

Congressperson Barbara Lee - www.barbaralee.house.gov

Governor Gerry Brown - www.govnews.ca.gov

State Senator Lini Hancock - sd09.senate.ca.gov

State Assembly person Rob Bonta, c/o his district director Jim Oddie, jim.oddie@asm.ca.gov

Mayor Libby Shaaf, www.officeofthemayor@oaklandnet.com

I appreciate your help and look forward to your comments.

Yours

Peter Turner

President

Lakeshore Homes Association