



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

Agenda Item 7

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Memorandum

TO: Policy Advisory Council

DATE: June 9, 2017

FR: Pam Grove, Staff Liaison

W.I. 1114

RE: Staff Liaison Report – June 2017

Resilient By Design Launches Bay Area Challenge

Resilient By Design, Bay Area Challenge, an innovative new approach to prepare the Bay Area for the effects of climate change, launched June 1st with an open call for community leaders, local elected officials, national experts and residents to come together and address this critical issue. The project will develop 10 creative, implementable and long-lasting infrastructure solutions and serve as a blueprint for addressing climate change before a storm or earthquake strikes and creates billions of dollars of damage and displaces vulnerable communities.

The Rockefeller Foundation has funded the effort through a \$4.6 million grant, providing the necessary support to create and scale a model of the successful New York Rebuild by Design program which was pioneered by the Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

For the press release with more information about the launch, go to:

<http://mtc.ca.gov/whats-happening/news/resilient-design-launches-bay-area-challenge>

To read more details about the challenge and Resilient By Design, go to:

<http://www.resilientbayarea.org/>

MTC Public Information Officer Wins WTS Rosa Parks Award

MTC Senior Public Information Catalina Alvarado has won the Women's Transportation Seminar's (WTS) Rosa M. Parks Diversity Leadership Award. Ms. Alvarado is the former staff liaison to MTC's Minority Citizens Advisory Committee, and the award recognizes her for her 30-plus year career at MTC dedicated to making the transportation policymaking arena more accessible to those who often do not have a voice. Ms. Alvarado was honored at the WTS event in New York in May and at the San Francisco's chapter dinner on June 7.

To read about the 2017 WTS winners, including Ms. Alvarado's achievements, go to:

<https://www.wtsinternational.org/about-wts/2017-recognition-award-winners/>

– more –

Golden Gate Bridge Turns 80

On Saturday, May 27, the Golden Gate Bridge had its 80th birthday, and while there was no physical celebration, the Golden Gate Bridge District commemorated the milestone on Facebook with an 80th anniversary event page and on Twitter using the #GGB80 and #MyGGBStory hashtags. The District asked the public to help celebrate the milestone by sharing their favorite memories and photographs of the bridge on social media. The Bridge opened to pedestrians on Thursday, May 27, 1937, and to vehicles the very next day on Friday, May 28, 1937.

You can follow the Golden Gate Bridge (and see the archived birthday posts/tweets) on Facebook at [facebook.com/GoldenGateBridge](https://www.facebook.com/GoldenGateBridge) and on [Twitter at twitter.com/GGBridge](https://twitter.com/GGBridge).

To view the 80th Anniversary Facebook event page, go to:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/363865187340372/>

Cormorants Flock to Nesting Platforms on New East Span

The colony of double-crested cormorants that long made its home on the old East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge finally found its Field of Dreams on the Skyway section of the new East Span last month, when the first pair of the gangly black seabirds landed on the specially-designed nesting platforms that had been awaiting their arrival since the Skyway's completion a decade ago.

Knowing that the planned demolition of the old East Span would displace more than a thousand cormorants who nested on the crossbeams beneath the bridge's truss section, designers of the new East Span included a new home for the birds: some 6,000 square feet of stainless steel platforms tucked below the twin roadway decks. Construction of the platforms was a requirement for Caltrans to secure permits for the new bridge as well as to comply with both state and federal endangered species acts and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. All the cormorants had to do was fly the short distance from the old bridge to the new. But the birds would not budge.

So Caltrans installed decoys to lure the cormorants into joining their brethren to the north. Nothing. Naturalists sweetened the pot with mirror boxes on the platforms that allowed passing cormorants to see themselves in their new home. Still nothing. Artificial nests fashioned from old holiday wreaths attracted nary a new arrival. Nor did an electronic audio system that played an endless string of cormorant come-ons. As dismantling of the old truss section got underway last year and the cormorants' old habitat began shrinking, the birds still refused to relocate, opting instead for ever-denser occupation of the old neighborhood. When the last of the old truss sections was removed late this March, the cormorants seemed to have vanished.

Where had the cormorants gone? No one quite knows the answer. But the first break in the case came in early April as the annual nesting season began and a video monitoring system captured the landing on one of the platforms by a pioneering pair of the puzzling pescetarians. Word of the spiffy waterfront condos appears to have spread quickly – if late – among the cormorant community. By mid-May, estimates of the colony's population had swelled to more than 700, with reinforcements arriving daily.

– more –

"The Bay Bridge cormorant colony is one of the largest in all of Northern California," said Caltrans Environmental Compliance Manager Stefan Galvez. "The successful relocation of the community to the nesting platforms on the new East Span is an important milestone for ensuring the permanence of the cormorant population in San Francisco Bay."

Executive Director's Report

The following items are excerpts from the May 2017 Executive Director's Report to the Commission. Read the report in its entirety at:

<http://www.mtc.ca.gov/whats-happening/news/executive-directors-report>.

- **Plan Bay Area Wins Award – May 10, Washington, DC**
I'm very pleased to report that the Plan Bay Area and our One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) program have won a Transportation Planning Excellence Award from the Federal Highway Administration. We were one of 11 award winners nationwide. Congratulations also to our colleagues at the San Diego Association of Governments, which won "Best of the Best" recognition in the same category.
- **MPO Coordination Rule Repealed – May 12, Washington, DC**
President Trump has signed legislation to repeal the ill-advised rulemaking finalized in the waning days of the Obama Administration that would have required scores of metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) either to adopt joint plans and programs – or merge together entirely – in order to address the issue of multiple MPOs existing in some metropolitan areas, especially along the East Coast. The repealed rule was truly a case of the cure being worse than the disease.
- **Caltrain FFGA Signed – May 22, Washington, DC**
In a dramatic turnabout, the Trump Administration agreed to sign the \$650 million full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) to electrify the Caltrain commuter rail system serving the San Francisco Peninsula. This action will enable the project to begin construction in the next several weeks. Senator Feinstein deserves great credit for galvanizing the Bay Area's lobbying campaign to the FFGA signed after all.