

BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

Vol. 13, No. 1

Bennett Valley Homeowners Association

March 1990

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The Board meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7:30 PM at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. We invite your attendance and participation.

MEMO FROM THE BOARD

This Newsletter, our first in 1990, is devoted almost entirely to a very important issue which vitally affects the future of our beautiful valley; namely, The Highway 12 Connector. There has been considerable publicity relative to the Sonoma County Transportation Committee deliberations as well as The City of Santa Rosa alternative studies.

The City of Santa Rosa City Council has included, in their deliberations, a study alternative that would construct a two-lane or four-lane road from Yulupa Avenue and Bennett Valley Road to Highway 12 at Kenwood.

It is our view that construction of such a route would involve serious environmental and socioeconomic concerns and we are alarmed by this threat. Accordingly, we have already met with both the Warm Springs Road Association and the Glen Ellen Association and we have their support in jointly lobbying against this alternative. We are also contacting the Kenwood Homeowners Association for their support.

We have written letters to Janet Nicholas, 1st District Supervisor, and to the Santa Rosa City Council. To the Council we stated:

“The ‘upgrading’ of Bennett Valley Road to an Alternate Highway 12 would result in direct loss or degradation of the following: agricultural land, including prime soils and producing vineyards; riparian habitat on Matanzas and Sonoma Creeks, including steelhead spawning grounds on virtually the entire length of Warm Springs Road; several potential archaeological sites; and at least one vernal pool.

As to ‘socioeconomic factors’, the route itself, and the growth it would induce, would constitute violations of the Bennett Valley Specific Plan and both Santa Rosa and Sonoma County General Plans. While this alternative might appear attractive if the City’s motives were to dump its problems on an apparently powerless segment of the unincorporated County’s population, we feel certain that you will understand that such a solution would be not only unwise, but also unfair. In any event we view this threat as anathema to the identity of the agricultural and

MEMO - Continued

rural residential community we have worked to create and preserve. We will be prepared to address the issue in whatever forum circumstances may dictate.”

To date, we have not received a response from the Council.

To Janet Nicholas we expressed similar concerns and her prompt response as follows was very encouraging. She stated:

“As you know, I met some six months ago with leaders of Santa Rosa area neighborhood groups to discuss the City Council’s Spring Lake Bridgetunnel/freeway proposal. The Council seems to be relying on a long standing pattern of attempting to pit one group against another in an effort to disperse opposition to it’s officially sanctioned option of construction of a freeway through Spring Lake Park. While I find the City’s strategy both offensive and juvenile, I have every confidence in the wisdom of the people of Sonoma County and the City of Santa Rosa. The beauty of both Spring Lake Park and the bucolic Bennett Valley landscape are, I believe, greatly appreciated and valued by all Sonoma County residents. A freeway through either ‘option’ would be environmentally unsound, economically infeasible and serve only to destroy the very quality of life we are all struggling to preserve and protect. Please rest assured that I will continue to strenuously oppose such a proposal and carefully monitor the Santa Rosa City Council’s maneuvers.

The Homeowners Association is indeed fortunate to have someone as knowledgeable and dedicated as Wells Wagner actively monitoring the Sonoma County Transportation Committee meetings. I will be working with Wells and advising you of meetings where the Spring Lake issue will be discussed. In the interim, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss strategies with your board, at your convenience.”

In the future, we will be following this matter closely and will keep our membership advised as to the possible help needed in our collective efforts.

DON’T FORGET: This is the time of the year for new and renewed membership dues, we need your help! See last page for dues and membership information.

Bill Wright

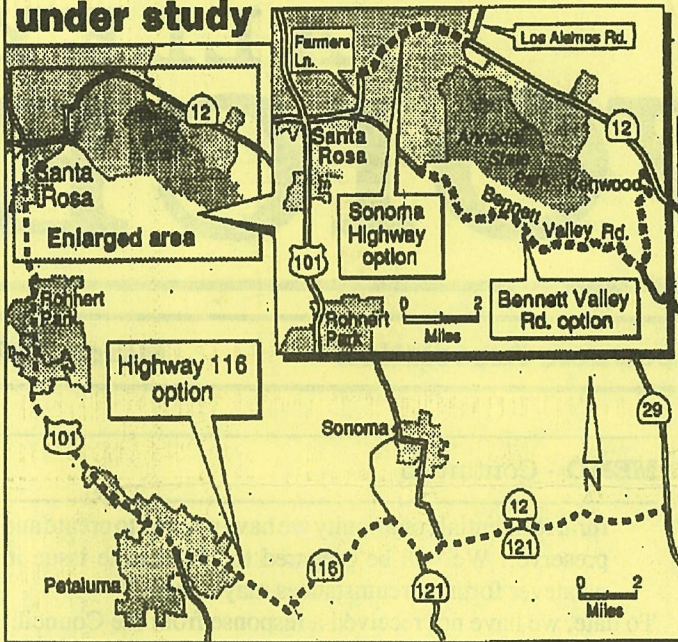
THREAT TO BENNETT VALLEY FROM CAL-TRANS STUDY

The Board of Directors of the Bennett Valley Homeowners’ Association was recently provided excerpts of a Cal-Trans study of alternatives to the present routing of Highway 12 through Santa Rosa on Farmers’ Lane. The study, requested by the City of Santa Rosa, provided a cost estimate for two routing options; first, an elevated highway from Farmers’ Lane over the Spring Lake area to Los Alamos Road and, second, construction of either a four or two lane road through Bennett Valley to Kenwood. Not included were the options of routing Highway 12 along Farmers’ Lane, Yulupa Avenue, or Summerfield Road.

Continued on next page

BENNETT VALLEY THREAT - Continued

Additional Hwy 12 alternatives under study



Construction of a two-lane road from Yulupa Avenue and Bennett Valley Road to Highway 12 at Kenwood would cost \$50 million, according to Cal-Trans, while a four-lane road along the same route would cost \$100 million. The Spring Lake alternative would cost approximately \$250 million. Cal-Trans expressed the opinion that the Bennett Valley option could involve serious environmental/economic factors.

Outlined below are other options being actively considered by the Santa Rosa City Council. These options are in addition to the previously studied routes running through, south or north of Spring Lake.

1. Bypass the park on Bennett Valley Road

This option calls for building a new section of Highway 12 on right-of-way already owned by the city between Farmers Lane and Yulupa Avenue. Traffic would flow south on Yulupa to Bennett Valley Road, which would be improved to highway standards at either two or four lanes.

Traffic would then jog north on Warm Springs Road, also to be improved to two or four lanes. At Kenwood, the road would rejoin the present Highway 12. Cost would range from \$50 million for two lanes to \$100 million for four lanes.

2. Push traffic south to Petaluma

If this alternative is chosen, Highway 101 would be widened to eight lanes south of Santa Rosa to the junction with

Highway 116 east. Highways 116 and 121 would be widened to four lanes to the junction with Highway 29.

This is the county Board of Supervisors' preferred way of handling east-west traffic across the county. Cost is estimated at \$450 million.

3. Send cars along Sonoma Highway

Under this proposal, the city would widen the present Highway 12 route on Sonoma Highway to six lanes between Farmers Lane and Los Alamos Road. Farmers Lane would be unchanged. The estimated cost is \$50 million.

The City Council was also interested in studying additional routes using city streets.

The July study examined the possibility of building an expressway between Farmers Lane and Summerfield Road, widening Summerfield Road to five lanes and improving at least 10 intersections in the area.

The price tag of dispersing the traffic on city streets this way was estimated at \$418 million.

Now the staff will analyze two other possibilities:

4. Extend Summerfield Road south

This variation also involves building an expressway from Farmers Lane to Summerfield Road and widening Summerfield to five lanes. But it would extend Summerfield Road from Bethards Drive south along the golf course to Bennett Valley Road. The cost is estimated at \$25 million to \$30 million.

5. Let Yulupa Avenue carry the load

This alternative calls for an expressway from Farmers Lane to Yulupa Avenue, stopping short of Summerfield Road. Yulupa Avenue would be widened to four lanes between Sonoma Avenue and Montgomery Drive. Montgomery Drive would be widened to four lanes until it reached Mission Boulevard. Cost is estimated at \$10 million to \$15 million.

Further study of all the available options to Highway 12 routing was recommended by Cal-Trans. However, the cost estimates developed to date clearly indicated the financial appeal of the Bennett Valley option. We must begin to organize now to protect Bennett Valley from the four-lane highway looming in its future.

We would appreciate and encourage your input.

Kevin Mc Carthy
Chairman, "Highway 12 Committee"

SONOMA MOUNTAIN GARDEN CLUB

The Sonoma Mountain Garden Club would like to extend an invitation to those residents of Bennett Valley and Sonoma Mountain areas to join us the last Tuesday of each month at 12 o'clock for garden updates, craft-work, and socializing. For further information, please contact Mary Sibbet 585-2129 or Angeline Raffo 546-1713.

BURGLARIES AT WOODSIDE

Last month, in Woodside, eight burglaries took place in one evening while most of the residents were at home. Automobiles and garages were stripped of valuable tools, sports equipment, stereos etc.

The Sheriff's Dept. is investigating the matter and has warned homeowners to be continually alert to strangers cruising in cars and to safely secure your home, garage and vehicles.

Unfortunately, rural areas appear no longer exempt from crimes.

Send suggestions to:

Attn: K. Mc Carthy
Bennett Valley Homeowners Association
P.O. Box 2666
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

GRANGE SPAGHETTI FEED

Saturday April 28 5:30 - 8:30
Adults \$5.00 - Children \$2.50
Grange Hall on Grange Road

Come to the ever-wonderful semi-annual spaghetti feed. Proceeds from this event will benefit Grange activities, repainting the Hall as well as Easter Seals, Dogs for the Deaf and Canine Company. Mark your calendar for this great feed.