

April 2014

Soundwall Study Petition Falls Short

The City of Oakland's year-long petition process to determine the expenditure of \$1.4 million of Caldecott Settlement Agreement funds has come to a close, and the results indicate there is not sufficient support to continue with the studies. The process was developed to ensure that studying two soundwall segments along State Route 24 between approximately Broadway and Telegraph Avenue has strong and widespread community support in the affected area. At multiple RCPC Town Hall meetings, Rockridge News articles and email communications beginning in fall 2012, the petition process was presented to the community, including the following key points:

- The process is modeled on other City processes, such as those used by neighborhoods requesting speed bumps and parking regulation changes.
- The City developed the petitions, including names & addresses of eligible property owners.
- Soundwall study proponents would collect signatures.
- Signature gatherers had *one full year* to collect signatures.
- If 2/3 of eligible property owners signed the petition, then the studies would move forward; if not, the funding allocated to these studies would be used for other priority projects on the Caldecott project list.

The City mailed a courtesy letter to all 481 identified eligible property owners on March 12, 2013 apprising them of the petition process. The petition was subsequently posted on the Fourth Bore Coalition website. In the intervening year, advocates of the soundwall studies wrote their own letters to property owners eligible to sign the petition, emailed and phoned them, and used old fashioned door-to-door neighborhood visits to collect the needed signatures.

One year later, on March 12, 2014, the City received petitions containing 300 signatures or 62%, 21 short of the 321 needed to indicate 2/3 support. Because an insufficient number of signatures was submitted, they not been verified.

After the petition process concluded, some signature-gatherers raised questions about the process. The City is evaluating the comments. Once this evaluation is complete, the City will update the community using the project email list and postings on the Fourth Bore Coalition website (www.fourthbore.org). For more information, contact Oakland Caldecott project coordinator, Victoria Eisen, at victoria@eisenletunic.com or 510/525-0220.