



## Bridge Rail Foundation Newsletter

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**Stop the Suicides at the Golden Gate Bridge**

Spread the word—send this on to a friend.

#### **Delay, Delay, Death**

Still no word on just when we might see the GGB's **EIR on the proposed suicide safety net.**



The bridge district agreed, in the spring of 2005, to proceed with initial design for a suicide barrier, wind-tunnel testing and the EIR. It took over a year to simply fund the effort [the district insisted none of its funds could be used--so outside dollars were the only option]. A year and a half later, the wind-tunnel testing began on a variety of concepts. This testing was complete in the spring of 2007. Once the wind-tunnel data was in, engineers could begin the preliminary designs. Five such designs were presented to the public in the summer of 2008. Following two public hearings, the GGB chose the safety net design in the fall of 2008 and began work on the final EIR. That is the report we now await.

It has been 4 1/2 years since the district agreed to the preliminary studies. Once those studies are done, funding will be needed for the final design, and funding for the construction needs to be secured. Then we might start building the net!

All this delay and time-consuming review continues to cost lives--at the current GGB suicide death rate we estimate the **loss of over 130 lives since the spring of 2005.**

#### **International Embarrassment**

Many of us believe the GGB acted in 2005 only as a response to the deep embarrassment it felt with word of Eric Steel's film *"The Bridge"*--a documentary that captured a full year of suicides off the span.



Just as we begin thinking its time for some more international embarrassment--look what pops up in the *London Times*:

#### **"Safety net delay ensures San Francisco's Golden Gate remains magnet for suicide"**

Olivia Crowther flew all the way to San Francisco from London to leap to her death from the Golden Gate Bridge. On the morning of June 25 last year, the 23-year-old was seen jumping 220ft (70m) into the water, becoming another statistic in the history of the world's most lethal bridge."  
. . . from *The Times Online*, November 7, 2009.

*The Times Online* receives wide circulation throughout the English-speaking world.

#### **But, First Things First . . .**

At a public hearing in 2005, Pat Hines--the father of bridge-jump survivor Kevin Hines--suggested GGB reinstitute the pedestrian toll it had maintained years earlier. His idea was that the toll itself would discourage some suicides and that interaction with a toll-taker might also cut down on the deaths. No one suggested it was a solution, but as an interim step, some lives could be saved and the toll could help fund the needed construction.



From the reaction Pat received, you would have thought he was calling for selling the bridge for scrap iron. NO! Never! Cannot be done! were the polite responses.

Well, things change.

The bridge district operating deficit has continued to grow. Suddenly a variety of revenue enhancements and cost cutting items are up for discussion. Higher tolls, laid-off bridge workers and the dreaded pedestrian toll are now on the agenda.

The deficit, it appears, now threatens the very life of the GGB bureaucracy--so something has to be done.

#### **Your Help & Ideas Needed**

Next year--2010--will be an absolutely critical year in the fight for a barrier on the Golden Gate Bridge. Over the next 14 months we must see:

- Completion of the EIR
- Funding of the final design
- Passage of a funding mechanism for the safety net.

The Bridge Rail Foundation--working with other suicide prevention advocates-- intends to see this through to success, but we will need your help. Next year will require just that much more of our friends and supporters. We anticipate asking your help with our communications and education efforts, with visits to key decision makers and special public events. Our outreach to other suicide prevention workers needs to broaden and we will need to work closely with other communities where there are problem bridges.

**Right now, we want your ideas.** If you have any thoughts on how we can better advocate for resolution of the GGB problem, please pass them along. New ideas for public events or additional venues for our "Whose Shoes?" exhibit are most welcome. We also welcome any new approaches for reaching decision makers or for outreach to our friends nationally. Jot down your ideas and send them along. **To email us, [Click Here](#)**

Of course, donations are welcome as well--see below for the link.

Our work is cut out for us--lets make 2010 a year of real progress.

#### **Help Us Fight to Install the Net**

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