CONSULTANT'S REPORT

1. The cost to acquire portions of the six properties needed for the proposed alignment is estimated at approximately $143,000, as compared to the cost to acquire portions of the four properties needed for design of a new bridge along the existing alignment, which will have to be determined.
2. The project is funded under the federal Highway Bridge Program (HBP) and State Prop. 1B Local Bridge Seismic Retrofit Account (LBSRA). Together this funding comprises over 97% of the project costs. Redesigning a replacement bridge on the existing alignment would result in duplicative environmental clearance and design costs that would therefore not be federally reimbursed, these are estimated at several hundred thousand dollars. In addition, because the roadway alignment (sharp curve at the south end of the bridge) would not be changed and does not and would not meet current design speed standards (20-25mph design speed), federal construction funding would not be granted at all for the project, as the new bridge would be functionally obsolete the day it is opened to traffic. As the project would not be eligible for HBP construction funds, it would not eligible for design funds, thus it is extremely likely that all support and design funds received to date would need to be repaid ($600,000 estimated).
3. The proposed alignment fixes the sight line issues and provides the minimum standard 20-25mph design speed. The existing alignment has a sharp curve at the south end of the bridge and tight curves at the north approach; neither meets current standards. By replacing the bridge on the existing alignment, that does not meet standards, the County is exposing itself to liability should a motorist, bicyclist, or pedestrian be involved in an accident at or near the bridge. While dangerous is a relative term, we consider those sight line issues as dangerous, and in fact would be precluded from placing our professional engineering stamp on such a design per the Engineers' Code of Conduct and State Board of Professional Engineers rules.
4. The theory that people will drive faster if you make a road straighter and therefore one designs sharp curves in the alignment it is not a defendable position in court of law. There are traffic calming methods being employed currently that serve to slow down traffic, but not by designing or not improving dangerous facilities. These measures can be introduced into the project, if necessary.
5. Road would need to be closed, cutting off access to the reservoir, if the bridge is replaced on the same alignment.

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