

FEATURES OF THE TRAIL

Several terms are used throughout the Stevens Creek Trail Feasibility Report. The terms describe the various types of trails, on-street bicycle facilities, engineered structures and points of interest. The types of trails vary with the opportunities and constraints posed by the creek corridor and the adjacent landscapes. Combinations of off-street and on-street facilities are proposed for the Stevens Creek Trail. Engineered structures are the improvements proposed to provide access across the creek and a pathway grade-separated from the roadways and rail lines. Points of interest include destination points, access points, staging areas and interpretive stations. These trail terms are defined below.

OFF-STREET TRAILS

Three types of off-street trails have been proposed along the Stevens Creek corridor and through the parklands. Each trail type has been selected to best meet the opportunities and constraints posed by the existing conditions, adjacent land uses and pedestrian and bicycle circulation system. Specific surfacing material choices can be determined during design of the trail.

Hard Surface Trails are intended to serve multiple uses by providing a stable, firm and slip-resistant surface. Surfacing materials include concrete, asphalt, and crushed stones or native soil with binders. These trails provide a sufficiently smooth surface to accommodate street bicycles, in-line skates and strollers. These trails may be considered by Caltrans to be Class I - Bicycle Pathways which serve the exclusive use of pedestrians and bicyclists and are defined as a right-of-way completely separated from motor vehicle street and highway traffic (Caltrans, Highway Design Manual: Chapter 1000, 1997). In most areas, the trail corridor meets the minimum requirement of an 8-foot wide trail with 2-foot wide shoulders to accommodate a Class I bicycle pathway. This trail type is also described in the Countywide Trails Master Plan Guideline G-2 - Shared Use Trail - Paved Tread Double Track. The guidelines recommend that a trail serving multiple uses meet an optimum width of 12 feet (Santa Clara County, 1995). In situations with limited uses or less intensity of use tread width is narrowed.

Soft Surface Trails are intended to serve multiple uses by providing a stable surface on natural soil conditions. These trails have a more rural character. The natural soil conditions can typically accommodate equestrians, hikers and off-road bicycles. All soft-surface multi-use trails will be developed in accordance with Countywide Trails Master Plan Guideline G-3 - Shared Use Trail - Natural Tread Double Track. The guidelines recommend that a trail

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serving multiple uses meet an optimum width of 12 feet (Santa Clara County, 1995). In situations with limited uses or less intensity of use tread width is narrowed.

Single-Track Trails are intended to serve several functions. In sensitive habitats or interpretive areas single-track trails may be used to minimize impact and to change the character of the trail experience. All soft-surface single use trails will be developed in accordance with Countywide Trails Master Plan Guideline G-4 - Single Track Trail - Natural Tread. The trail surface will be of native material with a 6-foot trail width. All interpretive trails will be developed in accordance with Countywide Trails Master Plan Guideline G-5 - Single-Use Trails - Natural Tread for Hikers. The trail surface will be of native material with a 3-foot trail width (Santa Clara County, 1995). Surfacing materials include native soil, bark chips, crushed shells, decomposed granite, etc. Surfacing materials should reflect the surroundings and enhance the interpretive experience. Single-track trails may also be designated in steep mountainous terrain. In these instances, the single-track trails are used to provide access in difficult areas and minimize the impact of erosion. Single-track trails frequently serve limited uses.

ON-STREET BICYCLE FACILITIES

Three types of on-street facilities have been proposed as components of the Stevens Creek Trail. These on-street facilities connect discontinuous segments of the creek corridor and open space lands.

On-Street Bicycle Lanes, in conjunction with sidewalks, are used in areas to route the trail around constrained segments of the creek corridor. Caltrans Design Guidelines state that a Class II - Bicycle Lane provides a 6-foot wide striped lane adjacent to motor vehicle traffic lanes. The trail alignment takes advantage of some existing bicycle lanes and proposes new bicycle lanes to connect portions of the streamside trail.

On-Street Bicycle Routes, in conjunction with sidewalks, are used as a part of the trail alignment. Caltrans Design Guidelines state that a Class III - Bicycle Route is shared by motorist and bicyclists. A street can be designated a bicycle route if the roadway meets minimum width requirements. The trail alignment takes advantage of some existing bicycle routes to connect portions of the streamside trail.

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Expanded Sidewalks are proposed in a few limited areas to provide connection from the creek corridor to the roadway system and bus lines. These facilities provide access to controlled intersections. These improvements call for the expansion of existing sidewalks to a minimum 10-foot width to accommodate two-way bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

ENGINEERED STRUCTURES

Engineered trail improvements include underpasses, pedestrian bridges and at-grade street crossings. Several structures have been proposed throughout the trail alignment. In most cases, these engineered improvements retrofit existing roadway bridges and provide an opportunity for human scale transportation. This need is frequently overlooked when designing infrastructure for the automobile.

Underpasses extend along the creek bank and cross beneath the roadways. In some instances, the underpasses follow existing Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) maintenance access roads. The underpasses retrofit existing roadway bridges to provide grade-separated trail crossings. The only underpass retained for consideration with the Stevens Creek Trail is located at McClellan Road.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridges are proposed to provide connections across the creek corridor. Pedestrian/bicycle bridges are intended to be of equal width to the trail and to completely span the creek without need for an in-channel support. This type of a structure is referred to as a clear span bridge. These bridges can also be designed to accommodate vehicle loading should a particularly inaccessible area of the trail require regular maintenance or patrol. A single pedestrian/bicycle bridge is proposed within Blackberry Farm to connect the park to the Stocklmeir property.

At-Grade Street Crossings are proposed along the on-street segments of the trail, the Class II - Bicycle Lanes and Class III - Bicycle Routes. Four at-grade street crossings are proposed as a result of limiting conditions within the creek corridor that force the trail onto city streets. The at-grade street crossings are proposed at controlled intersections or require modifications to those intersections that do not currently meet these criteria. The at-grade street crossings retained for consideration are located at McClellan Road near

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McClellan Ranch, Stevens Creek Boulevard at Phar Lap Drive, Stevens Creek Boulevard at Foothill Boulevard and Foothill Boulevard at Cristo Rey Drive.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Points of interest include destination points, access points, staging areas and interpretive stations. These features are indicated on the trail alignment maps. Destination points are community activity centers to which trail users may be traveling. Access points are locations that provide a direct connection to the trail system. Staging areas are developed sites along the trail that provide complete trailhead facilities including parking. Interpretive stations are scenic and/or educational overlooks of natural habitats and historical features. These sites are intended to enhance the experience and enjoyment of the trail. To prevent unauthorized vehicle access to the trail from any of these points of interest, bollards and controlled access gates will be placed at transition zones between public road right-of-ways and the Stevens Creek Trail, as necessary.

Destination Points include employment centers, retail districts, bus stops, educational campuses and recreational facilities. These activity centers are generally located directly along the trail or within a short distance from the trail. Those that are located a short distance from the creek corridor are identified on the trail alignment maps if they can be easily reached on bicycle or on foot from the trail.

Access Points provide a direct connection to the trail from employment centers, neighborhoods, recreational facilities and the public transportation and roadway systems. Access points are improved and may include bicycle/pedestrian bridges, ramps, short segments of trail, gates, bollards and signage. Access points are intended to accommodate trail users wishing to reach the trail by bicycle and on foot. Access points are identified at specific locations to minimize cross traffic and provide safe access to the trail.

Staging Areas are planned to accommodate those who wish to drive to a trailhead. A staging area provides access to the trail, automobile parking and trail amenities such as restrooms, drinking fountains, signage, etc. Many of the staging areas for the Stevens Creek Trail are located at existing parks situated along the trail route.

Interpretive Stations are trailside enhancements that provide opportunities to experience scenic vistas, observe flora and fauna, reflect on local history and illustrate hydraulic, geologic or biological phenomena. These stations include benches, overlooks, interpretive signs and other elements that assist

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the visitor in experiencing and understanding the natural world and significant historical events and lifestyles.