

# NEWS



ARCHIVE PHOTOGRAPH BY JACQUELINE RAMSEYER

Touting cost effectiveness, some residents want the Don Burnett Bicycle-Pedestrian Bridge to be included as part of the discussion for potential trail routes in the Stevens Creek Trail Joint Cities Feasibility Study.

## Trail study sparks debate over bridge path

### *Worried neighbors band together*

By MATT WILSON

Connecting the Stevens Creek Trail is like putting together a puzzle in which not all pieces fit perfectly.

Work continues to find feasible and preferred alternatives to complete a multi-use trail in the Stevens Creek corridor from Mountain View to Cupertino.

The cities of Los Altos, Mountain View, Sunnyvale and Cupertino are all participating in the Stevens Creek Trail Joint Cities Feasibility Study with the goal of

linking existing trails and creating new ones.

A packed Cupertino Senior Center on Feb. 25 saw residents come out to hear very tentative plans for trail connection from Homestead Road to Stevens Creek Boulevard, as well as trail connection from Rancho San Antonio County Park to Stevens Creek Boulevard. The presentation was led by Jana Sokale, principal environmental planner for the project.

There are limited options for creek-adjacent trails south of Fremont Avenue in Sunnyvale and before the trail will pick up again in the future on Stevens Creek Boulevard, near the Blue Pheasant Restaurant, as there is less public ownership of land, accord-

ing to Sokale.

Consultants are instead proposing bike routes and bike lanes along existing streets, particularly in the Maxine Avenue-Barranca Drive neighborhood north of Interstate 280; the Stokes Avenue-Dempster Avenue neighborhood south of Highway 85; and near the railroad tracks.

Tentative plans call for a possible overcrossing or pedestrian bridge across Interstate 280 to link the Barranca Drive neighborhood with neighborhoods situated south of the highway. Stevens Creek runs not far from these proposed routes.

However, not all residents are thrilled with the idea of bicyclists

coming into their secluded part of town. Residents of some neighborhoods are banding together to sway the Cupertino City Council to consider other alternatives.

A major point of contention is that the Don Burnett Bicycle-Pedestrian Bridge sits less than a mile away on Mary Avenue and already crosses Interstate 280.

The roughly 500-foot-long bridge was opened to the public on April 30, 2009. The bridge, exclusively for pedestrians and bicyclists, cost nearly \$15 million to construct. Approximately 80 percent of the funds came from bonds, grants and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.

*Bridge, page 8*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



# Bridge

*Continued from page 4*

Steve Elich, a resident of the Homestead Villaneighborhood and frequent user of the bridge, said residents in all the affected neighborhoods are working together to offer alternatives and consider the Don Burnett Bridge or other existing routes such as Foothill Boulevard. Petitions are being gathered and plans are in the works to meet with Cupertino officials.

“Many of us think we should utilize that already existing infrastructure,” Elich said. “This is first and foremost a fiscal responsibility issue. In this austere time, it’s not prudent to spend [public funds] on a bridge when one already exists. This bridge should be the cornerstone of the whole trail.”

Anne Ng, a member of the project’s citizens committee and supporter of Friends of the Stevens Creek Trail, is unsure if a bike path leading from Mary Avenue and down Stevens Creek Boulevard, past busy Highway 85 and near steep hills is the safest and most bike-friendly alternative.

“Freeway interchanges are the worst places for inexperienced cyclists and pedestrians,” she said. “Stevens Creek [Boulevard] is a very intimidating area.”

Residents are also worried about bicyclists and strangers someday traversing their neighborhood. The audience turned against the Feb. 25 presentation when Sokale said a trail could benefit a neighborhood.

This brought audible grumbling and displeasure from the crowd. One person shouted out near the end of the meeting, “Why are we wasting so much money on this project?”

The next community outreach meeting will likely not be until April or May, as consultants and staff work to read through hundreds of survey responses from residents and meeting attendees. Sokale told the Feb. 25 audience that the staff had received 154 responses up to the Sunnyvale meeting on Jan. 30.

*For more information about the Stevens Creek Trail Joint Feasibility Study, visit [StevensCreekTrail.inSunnyvale.com](http://StevensCreekTrail.inSunnyvale.com). To watch the full Feb. 25 meeting, visit [cupertino.org](http://cupertino.org).*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]