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## NEWS

# Stevens Creek Trail project may move on without Los Altos

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Written by Alicia Castro - Staff Writer/aliciac@latc.com

After analyzing potential routes to connect the Stevens Creek Trail, a regional team has issued its final recommendations – and none includes a designated path through Los Altos.

“I feel confident that the recommendation the four cities came up with is the best recommendation from the trail perspective and respectful of the residential perspective,” said Los Altos Councilwoman Jeannie Bruins, the city’s representative on the joint effort.

To review the recommendations, the Los Altos City Council and the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) convened Oct. 27 at Grant Park Community Center, near the Los Altos streets most impacted by the three-year regional effort.

Although the regional recommendation does not include any designated paths within Los Altos, it does call for “modest on-street bike/pedestrian improvements” consistent with the city’s planning documents on Fallen Leaf Lane, one of the roadways studied in the process. In future upgrades, the residential street would receive white roadway striping and signs labeling it a bike route.

Bruins said including recommendations related to Fallen Leaf validates Los Altos’ current plans for upgrades.

In 2008, Los Altos embarked on its own feasibility study, which resulted in a recommendation for a preferred alignment that extended through the creek corridor parallel to Fremont Avenue and Grant Road. The Los Altos City Council accepted the report but did not adopt a preferred alternative, instead pursuing a regional study that would include representation from the four collaborating jurisdictions.



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**Regional study**

The Four Cities Coordinated Stevens Creek Trail Feasibility Study Joint Cities Working Team – comprising representatives from Los Altos, Mountain View, Sunnyvale and Cupertino – recommended a route to connect the multiuse Stevens Creek Trail from Mountain View to Cupertino. Based on the feasibility study and nearly 950 public comments, the regional team identified recommended routes in three different segments.

According to the recommendations, the first segment – from Dale Avenue/Heatherstone Way to Fremont Avenue – would wend through existing open-space areas along Stevens Creek.

The second segment – from Fremont Avenue to Homestead Road – could involve an off-street pathway on Bernardo Avenue. However, the working team determined that Sunnyvale would need to conduct an additional traffic study to determine whether the recommended alignment is workable. If the pathway is deemed infeasible, the team recommended that no routes be designated as the Stevens Creek Trail within that segment.

The regional team did not identify a route for an off-street facility in the third segment – from Homestead Road to Stevens Creek Boulevard – because of its heavily trafficked roads and potential highway reconfigurations. As with Fallen Leaf Lane, the working team supported various bicycle and pedestrian improvements, though not as official parts of the trail.

**Public input**

More than 100 residents packed the Grant Park Multipurpose Room for the city’s meeting, and 16 addressed the council and BPAC. The majority of speakers expressed relief that the longtime discussion appeared to be drawing to a close.

“Instead of changing the neighborhood we’ve all bought into that we want to protect, we’re actually enhancing it,” Los Altos resident Cliff Reinhardt said.

After the meeting, former BPAC member Bill Sheppard said he was pleased to see “less animosity and opposition.”

“I’m encouraged that, at least through the Los Altos reach of segment two, a feasible alternative can be supported,” he said. “The working group did a good job of balancing the options available.”

Some residents, however, worried about what could happen if the Bernardo Avenue pathway is found infeasible.

“Sunnyvale now has a whole uphill climb with regard to Bernardo,” said Michael Eiger, spokesman for the Fallen Leaf Lane Neighborhood Association. “If they’re all hanging their hopes on Bernardo for a Class 1 trail, that’s great if it gets approved. But if not, what’s to prevent this whole thing from coming up again?”

Eiger, on behalf of the neighborhood group, requested that the council include in its final deliberation a resolution that would prohibit future consideration of Fallen Leaf and only consider the Fremont/Grant alternative as a trail

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- Go back to the voters in a year or two with a more modest plan.
- Do nothing - they've already wasted enough money.
- Get creative - lease a portion of Hillview to help pay for center.

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connector.

### Next steps

BPAC will deliberate and provide a recommendation to the council at a special meeting slated 7 p.m. today at Grant Park Community Center. The council will consider the recommendations at its regular Nov. 24 meeting in the council chambers at 1 N. San Antonio Road.

“Hopefully, we’ll be able to put a bow around this and finish this up,” said Mayor Jan Pepper.

Bruins added that the council couldn’t bind future councilmembers by prohibiting pathway development of a given area like Fallen Leaf Lane.

“I hear that desire. It’s a reasonable request,” she said. “Our hands are tied. What we can do is be as explicit in our motions as possible.”

To view the working team recommendations, visit [sunnyvale.ca.gov/Departments/PublicWorks/StevensCreekTrailJointCitiesFeasibilityStudy.aspx](http://sunnyvale.ca.gov/Departments/PublicWorks/StevensCreekTrailJointCitiesFeasibilityStudy.aspx).

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