

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Long-awaited Stevens Creek Trail extension moves ahead



by **Emma Montalbano**
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Bicyclists and pedestrians use the Stevens Creek Trail in Mountain View on Feb. 25, 2025. Photo by Anna Hoch-Kenney.

After more than 10 years of delays, caused by a lack of funding and staffing, Mountain View is moving forward once again with plans to extend Stevens Creek Trail to connect to the city of Sunnyvale, as well as Mountain View and Alta Vista high schools.

The Mountain View City Council voted 6-0 last month to start the preliminary design process for the decades-in-the-making trail extension. John McAlister recused himself because he lives near the planned extension.

The existing path in Mountain View runs about five miles from Shoreline Park to the intersection of Heatherstone Way and Dale Avenue. The city will now design a 0.8 mile extension to West Remington Drive in Sunnyvale, which will also provide a connection to the secondary schools.

“I’m really glad to see this moving forward,” Council member Pat Showalter said at the meeting. “The Stevens Creek Trail is my gym. I mean, I really use it frequently, and I’m not alone.”

First created in the 1990s, the trail is currently broken up into three discontinuous segments in areas of Mountain View, Cupertino and the Santa Clara Mountains.

However, the ultimate vision for the trail is to have a continuous, approximately 27-mile path that stretches from the headwaters of Stevens Creek in the Santa Cruz Mountains to the San Francisco Bay at Shoreline Park. The finished path would pass

through county parks, an open space district and four cities, according to Jim Meyerson, a board member of Friends of Stevens Creek Trail, a local nonprofit that supports ongoing efforts to make this a reality.

“We’re just over halfway done with [the] project,” Meyerson said. “That’s not great progress in 30 years, but that’s the way it goes. It takes 10 years to get permission and six months to build a trail.”

A long time in the making

In 2015, cities across the Peninsula, including Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Cupertino and Los Altos, participated in a **coordinated study** exploring the possibility of extending the multi-use trail through their jurisdictions.

The study split the possible extensions into four different sections: Heatherstone Way in Mountain View to Fremont Avenue in Sunnyvale, Fremont Avenue to Homestead Road in Los Altos, Homestead Road to Stevens Creek Boulevard in Cupertino, and Stevens Creek Boulevard to Rancho San Antonio County Park.

Mountain View is collaborating with Sunnyvale to complete the first section, with Mountain View handling the portion up to West Remington Drive and Sunnyvale responsible for continuing it to Fremont Avenue.

Since 2015, the project has been delayed by limited funding and staffing from both cities, Mountain View spokesperson Lenka Wright told the Voice.

Following the City Council’s recent action, Mountain View now joins Sunnyvale in the preliminary design and environmental clearance phase of the extension project.

Mountain View expects this stage to take about two and half years, Wright said. The city’s budget for this phase alone is about \$6 million, with some money coming from a Valley Transportation Authority grant, some



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— JIM MEYERSON, FRIENDS OF STEVENS CREEK TRAIL

from the city's Park Land Dedication Fund and some from Sunnyvale.

The current scope of this phase, according to Wright, is to analyze proposed pathway routes and to prepare environmental clearance documents. As part of the project, Mountain View will explore the possibility of adding an east-west bicycle and pedestrian bridge over State Highway 85 that provides a connection to Mountain View and Alta Vista high schools from the planned trail extension on the east side of the freeway, Wright said.

The extension's final design will come as part of a subsequent phase. Mountain View's total cost of the extension should be "better defined" once the trail's alignment has been determined, Wright said.

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail Executive Director Rajiv Mathur described the path as a "jewel in the midst of a lot of concrete and glass and bricks."

"There has to be a balance between leaving things in their natural state and also allowing opportunity for the community to interact with that jewel, so the trail serves a very vital role in providing that access to the community," Mathur said.



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Much overdue! \$6M for 0.8 miles of trail design is outrageous though. Most of that cost is really highway barrier mitigation work that is the result of unfortunate and myopic decisions made decades ago with SR-85 design. Now building what should be the most basic and cost effective infrastructure (walking and cycling paths) is enormously expensive and born by tiny parks departments in local communities.