

Mountain View commuter corridor trail takes shape over freeway

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Highway 101 motorists may notice a new bridge forming above their heads between Rengstorff Avenue and Shoreline Boulevard in Mountain View.

But they won't see any new off-ramps. When completed, the span will open only to pedestrians and cyclists as an extension of the Permanente Creek Trail.

And many expected to use it will be workers, particularly those at Google on the northern side of that section of freeway.

"I can tell you that the Google employees were applauding loudly at the groundbreaking ceremony," said Dennis Drennan, real property program administrator for the Mountain View Public Works Department.

The Permanente Creek Trail currently runs between the Michaels At Shoreline restaurant near the Bay Trail along Permanente Creek until it reaches Highway 101. About a mile long now, the trail will measure about 1.3 miles when finished in March.

The trail will head south near a former U.S. Army Reserve Center and end on the south side of Old Middlefield Road once a tunnel is also completed in March.

But plans leave room for the trail to continue onto West Middlefield Road in the future. City staff soon will start designing a 500-foot extension to Rock Street so that eventually a 1,000-foot-long trail can be created between Rock and West Middlefield.

"The vision is to get it to the center of Mountain View," Drennan said of the Permanente Creek Trail.

Though the city is getting \$225,000 in grants from the

Santa Clara Valley Water District and the Transportation Fund for Clean Air, Drennan said the city is paying for most of the \$9 million project, which began in December.

Sean Rose, senior civil engineer for the city, warned that the bridge work over Highway 101 will result in occasional closures of some or all lanes. Today, for example, southbound lanes were scheduled to be closed until 5:30 a.m. and traffic rerouted. Motorists can check mountainview.gov for future closures.

Farther south in Mountain View, a similar trail extension is under way to pull the Stevens Creek Trail across Highway 85, making it more accessible to the Sunnyvale border.

Similar freeway closures are expected during the early hours Monday and Tuesday of next week to build a pedestrian bridge.

City officials hope the Stevens Creek Trail will eventually make its way down to Mountain View High School. But for now, the \$4.2 million project -- expected to be completed in February or March -- starts at Sleeper Avenue and ends at Dale Avenue and Heatherstone Way.

The trail continues along Stevens Creek and Highway 85 until it reaches the Bay Trail.

"The Stevens Creek Trail is a bit of wilderness, if you will, in an urban community," Drennan said. "It's

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extremely popular and I expect the Permanente Creek Trail will be very popular because of the location. You've got Google all over there with thousands of employees and other high-tech companies."

Drennan said he had heard estimates that 15,000 people work along the Permanente Creek corridor.

"We support trails and we build them and we put our money where our mouth is," he said.

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