

Trail System Leaving Some Residents in the Dust

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by Ted Cox on Sep 14, 2011

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Work on a new trail system that will expand San Jose's rural walkways and bike paths to 100 miles by 2022 is leaving some puzzled Willow Glen residents in the dust. (Photo by Felipe Buitrago)

The trail, aligned west to east in a wide U-shape from Lonus Avenue to Interstate 280, will eventually connect the Los Gatos Creek, Guadalupe River and Coyote Creek trails.

"The most important thing is it's the only east-west connector in all of San Jose," explains Taisia McMahon, president of Save Our Trails, a grassroots trail advocacy group. "All the trails run north and south, but you can't get east to west, which is not very useful."

The cleanup project runs along approximately 4,235 feet of land that cuts past back yards and business property lines in Willow Glen. Work will continue through October.

While Preciado and business owners like Durham have called the dust a disturbance, it hasn't been the only source of commotion caused by the Three Creeks Trail cleanup.

"There was a lot of ivy in that path where the railroad was," Preciado says. After it was torn out, "the rats and

the mice and the skunks and the raccoons all had to find new places to live. Some of them jumped the fence and some of them ran up our trees and through our yard."

There are the typical construction-related complaints about trucks taking up parking spaces and noise and traffic congestion.

But Oliverio says all of the people he has spoken to about the project did receive the DTSC notice, and he hasn't received complaints about the congestion.

"At the end, it's construction and there will always be traffic, whether you're building a school or a building or whatever," Oliverio says.

McMahon acknowledges that the cleanup is a nuisance. But, she says, making San Jose more accessible requires sacrifice.

"There is going to be a certain level of inconvenience and difficulty, created by the cleanup and construction of this trail. It's inevitable," McMahon says. "Whatever inconvenience and difficulty it creates, the civic amenity that it will become will outweigh the inconvenience tenfold."

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