



CUPERTINO

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Summary

AGENDA ITEM 17

AGENDA DATE February 16, 2010

SUBJECT AND ISSUE

Scenic Circle Access to Stevens Creek Corridor Park

1. Approve the design and construction of an additional public access point to Stevens Creek Corridor Park and Blackberry Farm from the west side of the Creek near Scenic Circle.
2. If approved, consideration of three alternative project options and approval of Alternative B as a new capital improvement project and budget in the amount of \$235,000 to design and construct the ADA modifications to the existing maintenance footbridge and a code compliant access trail from Scenic Circle to the east side of Stevens Creek in Blackberry Farm.

BACKGROUND

On December 6, 2005 the City Council voted to close the gate providing access to Blackberry Farm from Scenic Circle. The Council action followed extensive discussion on the issue.

The Council discussed the access issue again on October 17, 2006 and agreed to consider forming a task force to look into the issue, as long as it addresses the larger issue of safety in the Monta Vista High School, Kennedy Middle School, and Lincoln Elementary School area. Council did not act to reopen the gate at that time. Council asked Staff to return with proposals on forming such a task force.

The gate remained closed throughout the construction of the Stevens Creek Corridor Trail and Blackberry Farm Park. During the construction of the trail and the renovation of the park, the construction crew removed the north bridge (close to Blackberry Farm Golf Course), replaced the middle bridge with a new bridge, and temporarily removed the south bridge (close to the playground). The south bridge was restored in the same location, after the work in Stevens Creek was completed. The neighboring community was notified of this action by e-mail on July 23, 2008 in a Notice of Construction Activity. The south bridge is currently used for maintenance purposes only by staff.

The Stevens Creek Corridor Trail and Blackberry Farm Park reopened on July 4, 2009. The Director of Parks and Recreation established a Blackberry Farm Operations Advisory Committee to provide the department advice on the day to day operations of the trail and park. At its October 12, 2009 meeting, some of the neighbors brought the issue of providing a safe route to walk and bike to school through Blackberry Farm to the committee. The committee discussed ideas such as having the route accessible from Scenic Circle, during school hours only, with Parks and Recreation contract staff opening and closing the gate. Those who supported closing the gate in 2005 continued to oppose opening the gate for on the basis of neighborhood safety, parking, and traffic.

Parents brought up the same issue during open forum at the October 20, 2009 City Council meeting and spoke of the need for a safe route to the tri-school area now that Blackberry Farm and Stevens Creek Corridor Trail are open.

Staff proposed two options for a task force to consider this issue at the November 30, 2009 City Council meeting. The Council voted to bring the reopening of Scenic Circle gate issue to the December 15, 2009 City Council meeting.

ANALYSIS

On December 15, 2009, in considering the issue of opening a new access trail to Stevens Creek and Blackberry Farm, Council reviewed a preliminary project scope and description for the access. At the Council meeting staff specifically noted that the estimate was very preliminary and was not based on any design or engineering of such a project nor did it account for the potential environmental impact or permitting process.

At the conclusion of the discussion Council did not make a decision regarding the access point from Scenic Circle but directed Staff to investigate two additional alternatives to the staff alternative presented in the December 15th meeting. That original alternative is now referred to as Alternative A. The other alternatives are referred to as Alternatives B and C. The following is a summary of the alternatives. More specific details of each alternative are provided in the attached Exhibit A, B and C respectively.

The following discussion and description of alternatives is for Council's consideration should it approve a project for an additional access to the park from the west side of Stevens Creek.

DISCUSSION

Additional Public Access Trail to Stevens Creek Corridor Trail and Blackberry Farm

Over the years, since Council acted to close the Scenic Circle access gate in December 2005, Staff has maintained a neutral position on the issue owing to the imminent construction of the Stevens Creek Corridor Project which would require closure of all access points during construction.

However, since the matter has again been raised by neighbors and parents as well as by Council, Staff has reconsidered that issue and recommends that the additional access be approved. There are several reasons that form the basis for this Staff recommendation. These include the following:

1. Safer route for school children to the tri-school area on McClellan Road and Bubba Road.
The current route following McClellan Road or Stevens Creek Boulevard from Scenic to the Tri-School area tends to generate higher vehicular speeds owing to the downhill grades and some sight distance issues at the hairpin turns occurring over this reach of McClellan Road. A safe and code compliant trail and bridge through Blackberry farm would offer a more direct and safer route to school.
2. Convenient access for neighbors and park users to the west of Blackberry Farm Park.
Stevens Creek Corridor Trail and Blackberry Farm Park, particularly since reopening after completion of \$14 Million in public improvements and recreation facilities, is an amenity that should provide convenient and safe access for the entire community. An additional access point, which would effectively be a branch of the existing Stevens Creek Corridor Trail, would accomplish that goal and more conveniently open the Park and Trail for the neighborhoods to the west of the creek.
3. Supports the City's goals for alternative transportation and a Green environment.
The City has consistently supported projects that accommodate and encourage walking and bicycling throughout the community. An additional access point from the west side of the creek would achieve that goal of furthering opportunities for people to walk and bike through this important recreation area.

For all the above reasons, Staff has concluded that the appropriate recommendation for the Council's consideration is to identify and approve funding for a new Capital Improvement Project to provide an additional ADA and code compliant trail branch and bridge for access from Scenic Circle across Stevens Creek to Blackberry Farm and connecting to the existing Stevens Creek Corridor Trail. The following outlines three alternatives for Council to consider for such a project.

General Conditions and Design requirements

Certain elements and costs are common to all three alternatives, such as the work necessary to make the existing maintenance bridge ADA and pedestrian code compliant. The width of the pathway and surface material in all alternatives A, B and C are assumed to be similar.

A number of trail surface materials were considered during the analysis phase. The existing CEQA documents prohibit the use of petroleum products such as asphalt or oil impregnated gravel. Because a portion of the trail near the bridge is in the flood plain, other construction materials that typically contain chemicals or minerals that would be harmful to the steelhead cannot be used as well.

When annual maintenance costs are taken into consideration, the number of trail surface alternatives is further reduced. For the purposes of the cost estimates the surface material for trail is presumed to be the same material in all three alternatives.

During the final design phase it may be determined that the surface material for the portion of the trail that is above the flood plain could be a different material but it has been assumed to be the same for all three alternatives. However, this determination will have only a minor effect on the cost estimate, if any.

The significant variability of the alternatives, aside from the length of the trail, has mainly to do with the number of native and non-native trees that must be removed to accommodate the trail alignment and the attendant additional work required in the environmental review process as a result. These variables are discussed in each alternative below and shown in more detail in the Exhibits attached to this report.

Alternative A

This alternative begins at Scenic Circle near the intersection of Scenic Court. It is the shortest trail alternative at approximately 200 feet in length, of which most is in the flood plain. A small number of trees will need to be removed for the trail alignment, including a small young oak, three elms in poor condition, and one willow. One nearly dead walnut tree will also need to be removed. A summary of the project budget is provided below with additional detail provided in Attachment 1.

Environmental Compliance	\$ 25,000
Design & Construction Management	45,000
Construction	95,000
<u>Construction Contingency</u>	<u>15,000</u>

Total Alternative A	\$180,000
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The estimated total cost of Alternative A is higher than was first presented to Council in December. The recent investigations of the other alternatives and the compliant surface materials as well as additional engineering of the trail conditions have more accurately identified the scope of the design, construction and environmental costs that needed to be added to the project budget.

Alternative B

This alternative begins on Scenic Circle but further upstream from Alternative A. It is approximately 250 feet in length, most of which is in the flood plain. One 14-inch non-native Chinese elm tree will have to be removed to allow the trail alignment to avoid crossing over the sensitive root systems of a significant native oak and a walnut tree. Three other small trees will also need to be removed.

However, even with the tree removals, this project, because of the additional meandering of the trail will be the most environmentally appropriate for the setting. In addition, this alternative will help alleviate the expressed concerns of neighbors who are closest to the park boundary.

A summary of the project budget is provided below with additional detail in Attachment 1.

Environmental Compliance	\$ 30,000
Design & Construction Management	50,000
Construction	135,000
Construction Contingency	20,000

Total Alternative B **\$235,000**

Alternative C

This alternative begins on Scenic Circle, the furthest upstream and at the intersection of the Simms haul road and is approximately 1,260 feet long. Council asked Staff to consider a trail alignment that would allow the trail to be set back from the street and adjacent to the creek to the fullest extent possible.

Upon careful inspection of the entire length of that segment, it was discovered that significant excavation and retaining wall construction would be necessary in some locations immediately next to the creek. For these reasons, this alignment was found to be impractical and infeasible and was not studied further.

However, to develop this third alternative, a different trail alignment was studied that placed the trail for most of its length immediately behind the existing curb on Scenic Circle with limited locations where it might be feasible for the alignment to meander away from the curb into open spaces. Unfortunately, even this less intrusive alignment still may require the removal of at least four significant and protected oak trees, one with a trunk diameter of more than 3 feet. An additional 27, mostly native, trees would be affected and may have to be removed.

As such, it is expected that these impacts alone, along with anticipated difficulties in obtaining the necessary permits could very likely make this an unacceptable alternative, but it is provided here for Council consideration because it was specifically requested.

It should be noted that a sidewalk for the entire length of this alternative already exists on the opposite side of the street and is available for pedestrians. It is also common practice for cyclists to use the street instead of sidewalks when they are adjacent to each other. It is assumed that a trail just behind the curb would be treated more like a sidewalk than a trail. A summary of the project budget is provided below. More detail is provided in Attachment 1.

Environmental Compliance	\$ 45,000
Design & Construction Management	80,000
Construction	350,000
Construction Contingency	55,000

Total Alternative C **\$530,000**

SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES

<u>Alternative and Scope</u>	<u>Total Cost (Budget)</u>
A – Bridge ADA retrofits, 200 feet (+/-) Trail, some minor Tree removal	\$180,000
B – Bridge ADA retrofits, 250 feet (+/-) trail, minor tree removal, Tree protection from trail construction	\$235,000
C – Bridge ADA retrofits, 1,260 foot (+/-) trail, some behind Curb on Scenic, Major Tree removal	\$530,000

FISCAL IMPACT

Taking no action will have no cost impact.

Directing staff to proceed with any one of the three alternatives discussed above will result in a funding requirement from the General Fund. Staff's recommendation for Alternative B will require a total project budget of \$235,000.

On January 19, the Council approved a project budget for Scenic Circle access in the amount of \$125,000. To budget for Alternative B will require an additional allocation of \$110,000 as follows:

Project Budget Approved January 19, 2010	\$125,000
<u>Project Budget Estimate – Alternative B</u>	<u>(\$235,000)</u>
Additional Funding Required	\$110,000

Staff further recommends that, in accordance with previous Council direction on other new CIP projects that such funding be considered as part of the 2010-2011 Capital Improvement program along with other proposed CIP projects for the upcoming fiscal year.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

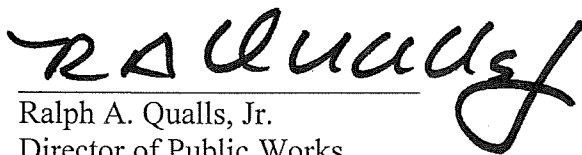
Scenic Circle Access to Stevens Creek Corridor Park

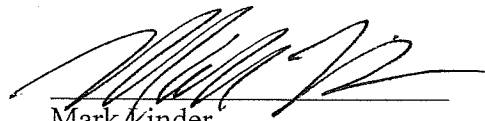
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3. Staff further recommends that, in accordance with previous Council direction on other new CIP projects that such funding be considered as part of the 2010-2011 Capital Improvement program along with other proposed CIP projects for the upcoming fiscal year.

However, should Council decide to take no action, the existing bridge will continue to be used for maintenance access to the landscaping on the west side of the creek.

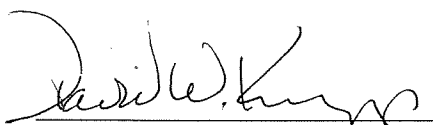
Submitted by:

Submitted by:


Ralph A. Qualls, Jr.
Director of Public Works


Mark Linder
Director of Parks and Recreation

Approved for Submission:


David W. Knapp
City Manager

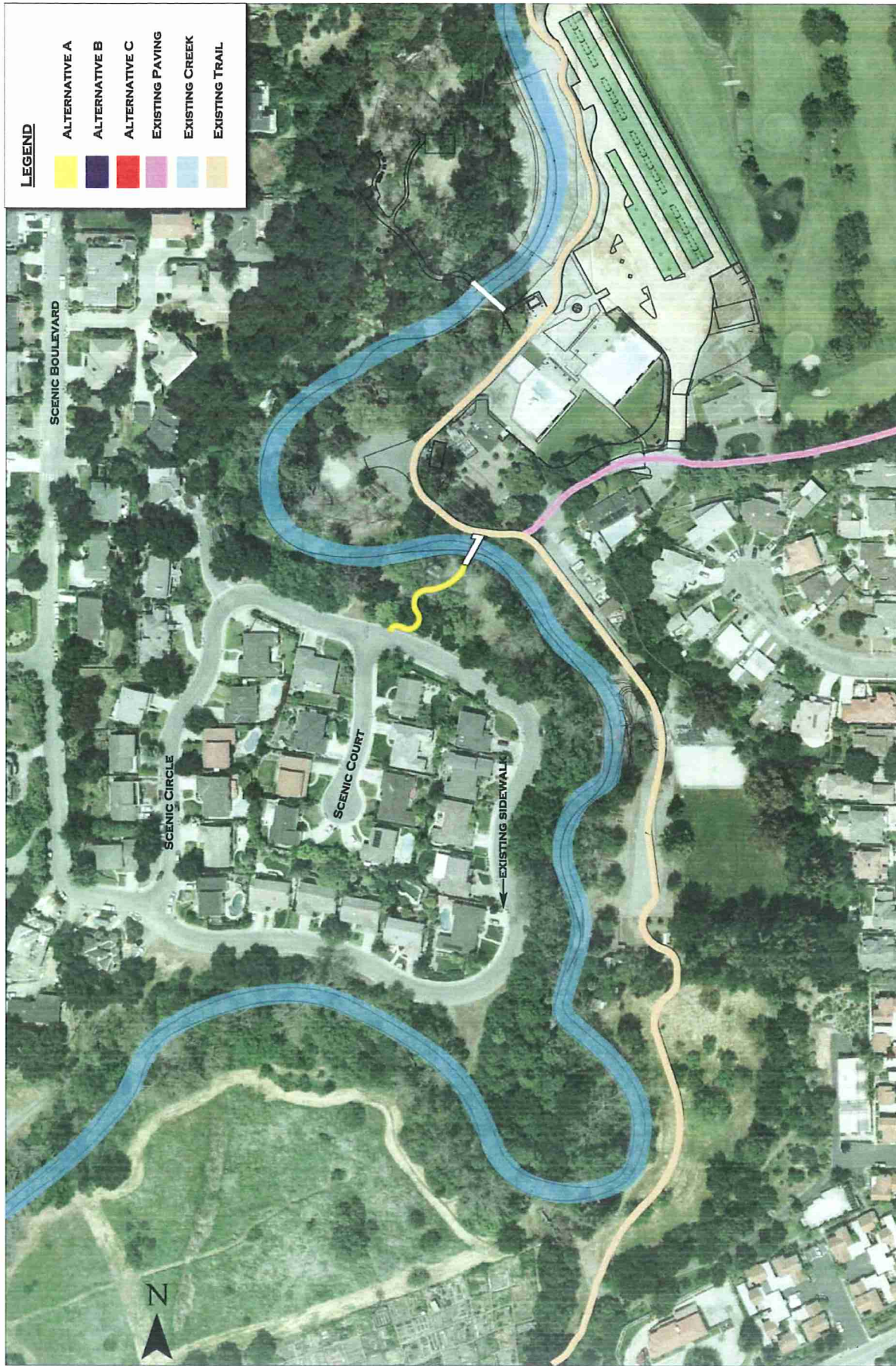
Attachment 1 – Alternative Cost Summary and maps of Alternatives A, B, and C.

ATTACHMENT 1

SCENIC CIRCLE ACCESS ALTERNATIVES COST SUMMARY

FEB. 16, 2010

	ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENT A	ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENT B	ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENT C
ENVIRONMENTAL			
CEQA CLEARANCE			
FILING FEES			
BIOLOGICAL SURVEYS			
ARBORIST			
TOTAL, ENVIRONMENTAL	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$45,000
DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT			
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT			
CIVIL ENGINEER			
GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER			
SURVEY			
CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT			
INSPECTION & TESTING			
BIDDING COSTS			
TOTAL, DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT	\$45,000	\$50,000	\$80,000
CONSTRUCTION			
DEMO, SITE PREP, EARTHWORK			
MOBILIZATION			
DEMOLITION			
GRADING			
ENGINEERED FILL/OFFHAUL			
TREE PROTECTION			
TRAFFIC CONTROL			
SUBTOTAL	\$23,000	\$42,000	\$125,000
TRAIL, BRIDGE UPGRADES, SITE WORK			
TRAIL CONSTRUCTION			
FENCING MODIFICATIONS & NEW GATE			
BRIDGE MODIFICATIONS			
ADA RAMPS			
SITE WORK			
SUBTOTAL	\$65,000	\$82,000	\$190,000
RESTORATION PLANTING			
PLANTINGS			
IRRIGATION			
EROSION CONTROL			
TREE REPLACEMENT			
PLANT MAINTENANCE			
SUBTOTAL	\$7,000	\$11,000	\$35,000
TOTAL, CONSTRUCTION	\$95,000	\$135,000	\$350,000
CONSTRUCTION CONTINGENCY	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$55,000
TOTAL PROJECT	\$180,000	\$235,000	\$530,000



ALTERNATIVE A

SCENIC CIRCLE TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY - CITY OF CUPERTINO





ALTERNATIVE B

SCENIC CIRCLE TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY - CITY OF CUPERTINO





ALTERNATIVE C

SCENIC CIRCLE TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY - CITY OF CUPERTINO



