

Supplement to Comment #786 #816

Name: Tyson Leistiko , Chris Lyon

The Blue Arrow above identifies an area that may require additional work on the creek bank to support the trail, where previously I had seen documentation showing this as a bank that wouldn't require additional engineering to support the trail.

I understand that not all trail combinations can be shown in a preliminary study, but taking my concerns into consideration I think the following should be an option for study if this corridor becomes a viable option for a future trail segment.



Figure 24 – Grade-separated options for connecting to Fremont Avenue.

Additional Consideration

The areas of concern for proximity to the interior living space of Townsend Terrace and Blackberry Terrace homes are again indicated by Red Arrows on a figure taken from the study. I have created and shown a third option for consideration if the trail is to pass under Highway 85 at this location where the impact to these homes is minimized. This was shown in its most simple form by combining the two existing diagrams, but in reality the termination of a combined underpass and creek crossing could terminate slightly northeast of where shown while remaining on the west bank. A zoomed in diagram of this concept is shown:



Thank you for your outreach and consideration of feedback and comments,

Tyson Leistiko
Resident, Townsend Terrace, Sunnyvale

Supplement to Comment #794

Name: Sudhir Virmani

Stevens Creek Trail

THE MYTH

For several years, Stevens Creek Trail (SCT) zealots have been propagating far and wide that a SCT extension can be constructed in a heavily built and populated residential area. They have used this propaganda to appeal to the gullible funders and other supporters of the "trail". But this is a complete myth. A trail- "a neater sweeter maiden in a cleaner, greener land" - cannot be built in such a congested area.

THE FANTASY

Belleville Way is the sole outlet for houses and residences bounded by 85, Fremont, Homestead and the Creek. It is also the location of the West Valley Elementary School and many students in this area attend Cupertino Middle School on Bernardo and go across the 85 overpass.

Around school start and end hours, there is heavy pedestrian, vehicular and, yes, bicycle traffic. This requires considerable vigil by the school crossing guards to ensure student and parent safety. During winter and rainy days the vehicular traffic backs up considerable distances from the school, both towards Homestead and Fremont. Any arbitrary and reduction in the volume of traffic and of parking space and increased difficulty of access will **seriously harm the safety, security and quality of life of the residents, students, and school staff.**

RECOMMENDATION

As a resident of The Dalles Ave on the corner of Belleville Way, I urge the Sunnyvale City Council to stop any attempt to designate Belleville Way, The Dalles Avenue and Bedford Ave wholly or in combination as a trail and then proceed to make infrastructure changes. The entire concept of a trail as currently fantasized by the Cities and, especially, the rabid Friends of Stevens Creek Trail, in the alignments under consideration should be given a decent funeral and buried.

GOING FORWARD

- Abandon the current Four Cities plan and studies.
- Upgrade and Augment existing infrastructure to provide greater and much safer access to bikes and pedestrians
- Avoid aggravating residents and reducing their quality of life. Give priority to resident's opinions.
- Post maps and signs as needed to ensure that the links between the two segments of the Stevens Creek Trail are clearly identifiable and visible.

Respectfully submitted

Sudhir Virmani

The Dalles Avenue, Sunnyvale

Supplement to Comment #815

Name: Shani Kleinhaus

COMMITTEE FOR
GREEN FOOTHILLSSIERRA
CLUB
FOUNDED 1892ACTION FOR A
HEALTHY PLANET

June 10, 2015

City of Sunnyvale Public Works Department
456 W. Olive Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
SCTfeasibilitystudy@sunnyvale.ca.gov

Re: Stevens Creek Trail Four Cities Joint Feasibility Study

The Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Committee for Green Foothills and Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society submit this letter in regards to the Stevens Creek Trail Four Cities Joint Feasibility Study. We write to support the "all city streets" option and use of existing infrastructure. We are not in favor of further impacting Stevens Creek remnant riparian habitats, which are heavily degraded already by development and infrastructure. The Stevens Creek corridor is extremely valuable to wildlife, and undisturbed sections are rare and diminishing. The remaining riparian habitat in the study area is simply too narrow to construct bridges and trails without taking a heavy and permanent toll on endangered species wildlife in Stevens Creek and its watershed.

The Feasibility Study

For decades, transit and right-of-way uses trumped all other considerations along Stevens Creek. But meandering through and along Highways 280, 85, 101, and 237, and shadowed by power lines, Stevens Creek and its diminished riparian ecosystem continue to provide life support to threatened steelhead trout and to a diversity of bird and wildlife species.

As acknowledged in the Stevens Creek Trail Four Cities Joint Feasibility Study, Stevens Creek provides significant wildlife habitat:

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service has designated Stevens Creek as "critical habitat" for the recovery of Central California Coast steelhead. More than 225 species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians rely on riparian habitat. Riparian habitat hosts the most diverse bird communities in the west. Less than 5% of California's riparian habitat remains (Riparian Habitat Joint Venture, 2004). The Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Project states that in the South Bay, "Riparian restoration and enhancement of tributary streams would improve stream and riparian habitat and benefit anadromous fishes,

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Name: Shani Kleinhaus

amphibians, small mammals and birds (Baylands Project, 1999, p. 129). Mammals including raccoon, opossum, striped skunk, gray fox, Eastern gray squirrel, Eastern fox squirrel, ground squirrel and black-tailed deer frequent the creek corridor and open space lands. Two California species of special concern are also known to occur in the creek corridor including the western pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*) and San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes annectens*). The creek supports four native fish species: three-spined stickleback, Sacramento sucker, California roach and Central California Coast steelhead. (P. 54-55)

The habitat along Stevens Creek is recognized by the California Department of Fish and Game as a threatened resource. Saltwater marsh and riparian plant and animal communities have been drastically diminished. Of the once bountiful wetlands habitat, only 5% remains. Enhancement and protection of the creek corridor is important to the survival of native plant and animal communities. (Initial Study/Environmental Assessment for the Stevens Creek Trail and Wildlife Corridor Project (1991) P.7)

The Stevens Creek corridor is one of the few areas in Mountain View providing habitat for wildlife. Many animals live along the creek corridor and many more use the green belt as a thoroughfare to reach different feeding areas without having to contend with traffic on city streets. The creek corridor serves a purpose for animals similar to the one envisioned for commuters. . (Initial Study/Environmental Assessment for the Stevens Creek Trail and Wildlife Corridor Project (1991) P.7)

Urban development has encroached along the creek corridor and valley floor causing the demise of the natural environment. Pockets of remnant forest exist along Stevens Creek and provide the only significant remaining riparian habitat for wildlife in Mountain View. . (Initial Study/Environmental Assessment for the Stevens Creek Trail and Wildlife Corridor Project (1991) P.8)

Thus, Stevens Creek and its riparian ecosystems provide unique, irreplaceable habitats for native species, and are critical for the persistence of many of the species that share our landscape.

Unfortunately, creekside trails are disruptive to riparian ecosystem function (see Appendix A: Impact of trails on Riparian Ecosystems). Trails impose adverse impacts on ecosystems not only due to construction, but also due to the facilitation of human access and activity. In riparian ecosystems, trails interfere with bird and wildlife access to food and water, wildlife movement and migration, nesting and breeding. This is why trails near creeks must maintain a buffer, or setback, that allows the ecosystem to function. Maintaining biological function in the urban section of Stevens Creek is paramount.

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Name: Shani Kleinhaus

According to the Feasibility Study, there are several points along the creek where there is inadequate width to support development of a trail. The "Creek Corridor" and "Partial Creek Corridor" alignments would require engineered structures attached to the Highway 85 soundwall and supported on piles driven into the creek bank (per the Feasibility Study at p. 57, "an approximately 100 foot structure slab trail on piles with curtain wall" and "an approximately 380 foot structure slab trail on piles"). Some, if not all of these piles would have to be below the high water line to support these structures, causing hydraulic shifts and increased erosion nearby. Such piles into the side of the bank, even if above high water, are destructive and require severe bank modification to restore stability.

The Feasibility Study also says "Trail segments that are proposed below the top of bank are estimated as poured concrete structures." Concrete and similar materials on the creek banks, and especially below high water lines are not environmentally acceptable. History has shown that armored banks eventually fail and fall into the creek. Heavy equipment in the creek for this construction is not environmentally acceptable. It is not acceptable to try to force a trail into these areas of inadequate width.

Thus, under the "Creek Corridor" and "Partial Creek Corridor" alignments, not only would there be no setback at all from the top of the bank, construction would be required within the creek channel, and the banks would need to be reinforced to support this structure. See Feasibility Study, p. 57 and Figure 23. This alteration of the creek channel would be detrimental to the hydrology of the creek as well as the wildlife in and around the creek corridor.

On page 89 Mountain View's EIR for constructing a trail on Mountain View property along the creek in this area to the Mountain View Los Altos border states "...approximately 74 trees would be removed in order to construct the proposed trail ..." Many of these are heritage trees. As this only considers the stretch to the Los Altos border, there would be many more trees removed to continue the trail to Fremont Ave. along the creek. And of course other riparian vegetation would also have to be removed.

Losing these trees and other vegetation would remove scarce wildlife habitat. According to fisheries biologists, the threatened steelhead trout requires cool water, and riparian trees and vegetation to shade the creek and to drop bugs and organic matter to feed the aquatic life in the creek. Losing these trees and the nearby vegetation will severely degrade the habitat for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife, including threatened steelhead trout.

As mentioned above, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service has designated Stevens Creek as "critical habitat" for the recovery of Central California Coast steelhead. This means that the creek must remain shaded. Additionally, special consideration of impediments to fish migration must be taken into account. The fish ladder downstream of Fremont Ave. has not functioned properly in low flows. The Santa Clara Valley Water District has a long term plan to correct the problem by

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moving the ladder to the west side of the creek. This is the side of the creek where the Feasibility Study would construct the trail, and there is only a narrow setback to the soundwall at this point. It is important to the long-term survival of Stevens Creek steelhead trout to avoid placing a trail where it could potentially interfere with the facilitation of fish migration in the future.

Conclusion

Creek and riparian ecosystem restoration and enhancements are beneficial, but restoration should not be conditioned on access – especially where access is delineated within 10-feet of the top-of the bank, or suspended from a soundwall.

Because the riparian corridor of Stevens Creek is so impacted already, and because there are sections where a setback is not feasible, the Stevens Creek Trail alignment should focus transit opportunities on existing infrastructure outside the riparian corridor. The "All City Streets" option is the only option to preserve our native species in our highly developed valley.

One of the goals of the Stevens Creek Trail Project is to increase native habitat areas and provide a natural setting for trails. City street trails could be constructed with strips of native vegetation rather than asphalt and concrete. This project provides an opportunity to increase habitat area rather than decrease existing habitat.

We thank you for your consideration,



Michael Ferreira
Executive Committee Member,



Alice Kaufman
Legislative Advocate,



Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D.
Environmental Advocate,



Joanne McFarlin
Stewardship Associate Director
Acterra

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Name: Shani Kleinhaus

Appendix A: Impact of trails on Riparian Ecosystems.

Riparian systems are one of the rarest habitat types in North America. About 80% of all animals use riparian resources and habitats at some life stage, and more than 50% of breeding birds nest chiefly in riparian habitats (Krueper 1992). These habitats are of particular value in lowlands (below 5,000 feet) as a source of direct sustenance for diverse animal species (Krueper 1993). Organisms moving through rugged landscapes often use riparian areas as travel routes. For example, many butterflies and frogs preferentially move along stream corridors (Orsack 1977, Kay 1989, USGS 2002). Although western pond turtles are capable of overland movements of up to 0.5 km (0.3 mi) (Holland 1994), they preferentially move along stream courses (Bury 1988). Even large, mobile vertebrates, such as mountain lions, have shown preferences for moving along riparian corridors (Beier 1995, Dickson et al. 2004). Riparian systems, because they provide connectivity between habitats and across elevational zones, will be especially important to allow species to respond and adapt to climate change (Seavy et al. 2009).

The following discussion illustrates and documents the impacts from trail usage to surrounding upland and riparian habitats. Complicating efforts to address these impacts is the fact they are so widely underestimated. A survey of backcountry hikers in Utah revealed that 50% assumed they had no negative impacts on the wildlife in the surrounding area (Taylor & Knight, 2003). A large body of research refutes such assumptions for sites both distant from and adjacent to urban areas. For instance, one study showed that even when bird communities in riparian areas have been heavily impacted by urbanization in surrounding lands, the presence of hikers, joggers and bicyclers along a recreational trail have a significant further impact, especially on species that nest close to the ground or forage low for insects or seeds (Miller et al., 2003).

In many cases, disturbance from human activity is the most important factor affecting the number of bird species, surpassing even the effects from habitat loss due to development (Schlesinger et al., 2008). In a study of six sites, three with a recreational trail running adjacent to a riparian corridor and three with no trail, the number of raptor species was consistently greater in the sites with no trail (Fletcher et al., 1999). In grasslands, nests were less likely to occur near trails than away from trails. In grasslands and forests, nest survival increased with increasing distance from a trail. The zone of influence was approximately 75 meters, or 246 feet, from a trail for most species (Miller et al., 1998). Trails alter predation patterns differently for different groups of animals; birds attack more nests near trails than away from trails, whereas mammals appear to avoid nests near trails to some extent (Miller & Hobbs, 2000).

Hiking and bicycling trails were shown in one study to be correlated with a five-fold decline in the density of native carnivores and a substantial increase in nonnative carnivore species (Reed & Merenlender, 2008). The authors suggested this might put an unsustainable predation pressure on native birds and small mammals,

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thereby jeopardizing their survival. The authors went on to say that in larger areas, the configuration of the trails may be the most important factor, but in moderately sized areas near urban development, the key variable seems to be whether or not the site is open to public access. A related study suggested that bobcats, in particular, were displaced by the disturbance caused by bikers and hikers (George & Crooks, 2006). It may be interesting to note that the studies reviewed did not indicate bicycle traffic on trails to be more disruptive to wildlife than pedestrians. In fact, some of the authors voiced their sneaking suspicion that those of us who stop and gawk at the wildlife have a greater impact than those who whiz by on bicycles.

The above studies are not local, but are cited because of their applicability and relevance to our local situation – proposed recreational trails and other public access to upland and riparian open space areas. These studies are part of a much larger body of scientific evidence documenting the effects that trails have on surrounding habitat. In an interesting counterpoint, a local study found bayside trails had no significant effects on shorebird numbers, species richness, or percent of birds foraging (Trulio & Sokale, 2008). There are a great many differences between bayside and streamside habitats that prevent applying the findings of this study to riparian areas, though. For instance, shorebirds have the open bay on one side in which to flee if needed, are used to foraging in sand flat areas which have no vegetative cover, and do not nest there.

Citations

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Name: Shani Kleinhaus

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Taylor, A.R., Knight, R.L., 2003. Wildlife responses to recreation and associated visitor perceptions. *Ecological Applications* 13:951-963.

Trulio, L.A. and Sokale, J., 2008. Foraging shorebird response to trail use around San Francisco Bay. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 72(8):1775-1780.

Wenger, S.J. 1999. A review of the scientific literature on riparian buffer width, extent and vegetation. Office of Public Service and Outreach, Institute of Ecology, University of Georgia.
http://www.rivercenter.uga.edu/service/tools/buffers/buffer_lit_review.pdf

CC:

Council Member Tara Martin-Milius, Sunnyvale

Council Member Pat Showalter, Mountain view

Council Member Darcy Paul, Cupertino

Council Member Jeannie Bruins, Los Altos

Director Nai Hsueh, Santa Clara Valley Water District

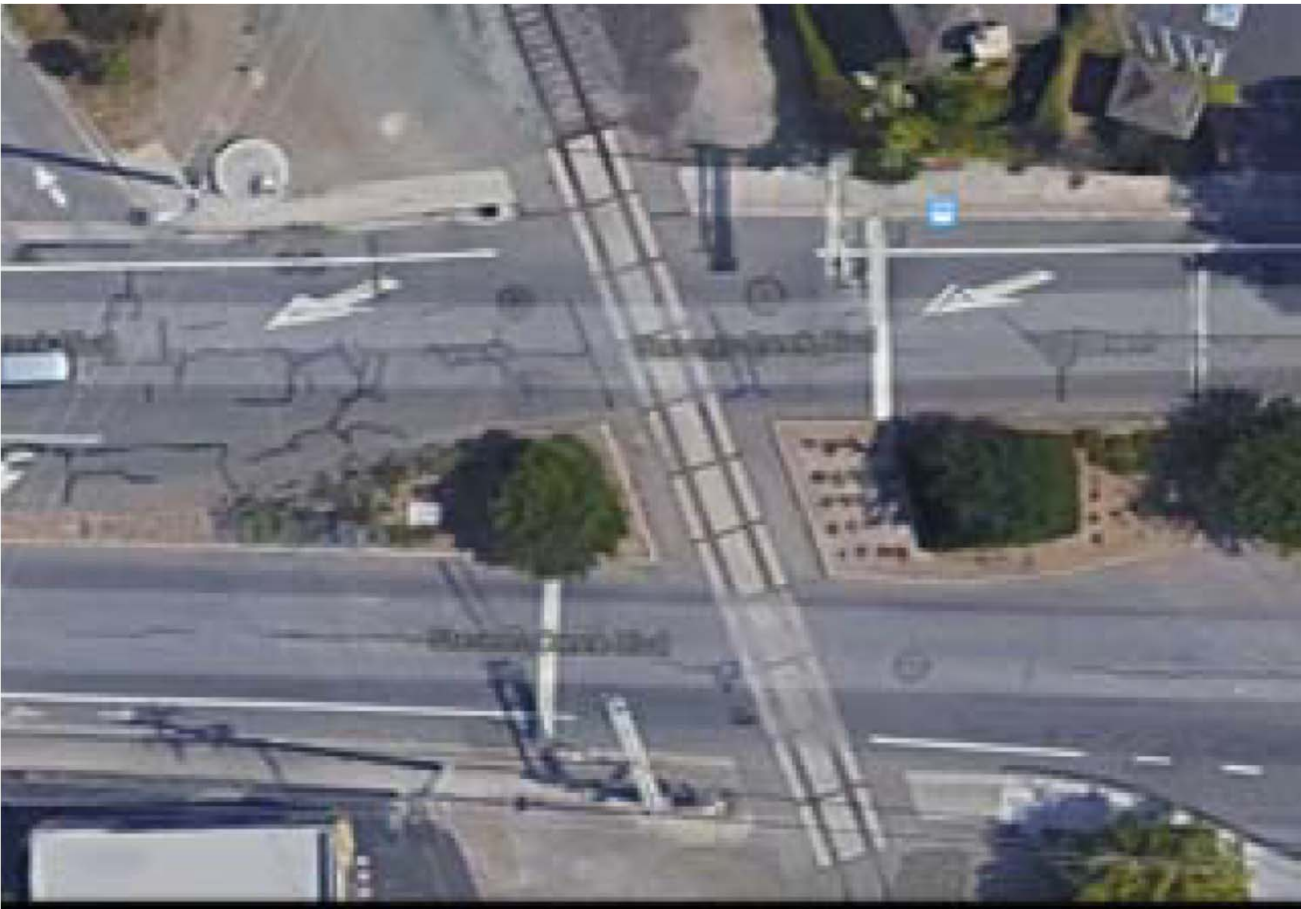
Supplement to Comment #827

Name: Kim Hall



Supplement to Comment #863

Name: Kathleen Cordova



Supplement to Comment #866

Name: Bruce England



Supplement to Comment #866

Name: Bruce England



Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning
Mountain View, CA 94041

June 10, 2015

Re: Support for extending the Stevens Creek Trail

Dear Working Group members, Council members, and Staff:

The Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning (MVCSP) would like to express our support for extending the Stevens Creek Trail beyond its current stopping point south of Fremont Avenue to connect with the part of the trail that already exists south of Stevens Creek Boulevard.

The Stevens Creek Trail will serve the region optimally to the extent that it interconnects communities in the area. In the same way that road systems allow those driving to travel across distances without concern that the roads end at city limits, trails allow those walking and biking to enjoy the same convenience. It is this feature that is most important and essential through the proposed extension work.

We understand the concerns expressed about extending the trail. These concerns were raised also when the trail was established in Mountain View, and these concerns mostly or entirely abated once the trail was in place. As it exists today, it is widely viewed as a valuable asset for the city, both by those who use it frequently or only occasionally. Even for those who do not use the trail, it is something they can be proud of in their home town. It also helps to shift travel to walking and bicycling and to encourage people to leave their cars at home more often than they might otherwise. This shift improves health for those using the trails and for all through reduced greenhouse-gas emissions in the region.

For the extension design, we favor what the Friends of the Stevens Creek Trail supports, which includes:

- An initial extension from the trail's current stopping point south to Fremont Avenue along the creek (similar to how much of the trail exists in Mountain View today)
- A bridge over Fremont Avenue to connect the trail to Bernardo Avenue
- A dedicated, separated bicycle path on Bernardo between Fremont and Homestead Road with sidewalks retained for pedestrian needs
- Use of existing streets between Bernardo and Stevens Creek Boulevard where the trail could connect to the existing trail at that point in Cupertino

We do thank you for the work you are doing on this project, and we look forward to the outcome of the project trusting that it will result in the extension that many of us in the community are anticipating.

Supplement to Comment #866

Name: Bruce England

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bruce England".

Bruce England

on behalf of the Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning

About Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning

The Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning is a group of local volunteers—comprised of over 70 members—dedicated to making Mountain View as beautiful, economically healthy, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian accessible, and affordable as possible. MVCSP member interest and expertise covers areas such as housing, transportation, the environment, the economy, and beyond!

Supplement to Comment

#896

Name: Valerie Armento

Let's not wind up doing something like this with regard to SCT



Brant Ward / The Chronicle 2013

Bicyclists try out the temporary, half-mile-long path on the eastern span of the Bay Bridge on opening day in September.

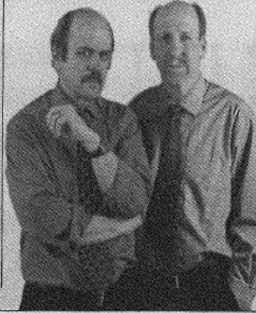
Expensive Bay Bridge bikeway to be razed for permanent path

The Bay Area Toll Authority spent \$9.4 million to build a temporary entrance so the Bay Bridge's bike path could be ready when the new eastern span opened to traffic in September.

And now — after less than seven months — the half-mile-long connector is being torn down to make way for a new, permanent gateway.

That puts the cost to provide temporary bike and pedestrian access to the bridge at about

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\$47,000 a day.

Metropolitan Transportation Commission chief **Steve Heminger** says the cost was higher than expected, but nonetheless defended the spending.

"This bridge has always been about access for all kinds of travel modes, not just automobiles," he said. "And if we were going to get cars on the bridge by Labor Day, then why shouldn't we get bikers and

M&R continues on C3