

FEASIBILITY AND SITE ANALYSES

A pedestrian and bicycle trail along Stevens Creek from Shoreline At Mountain View to Fremont Avenue in Los Altos can be developed, but will require engineering throughout the creek corridor. In areas where major thoroughfares cross the park chain, the creek corridor is narrow and presents challenges to constructing an uninterrupted trail. The obstacles encountered at these narrow areas can be overcome by engineering underpasses, overcrossings, footbridges and street crossings.

Trail alignment and conceptual engineering solutions proposed for the Stevens Creek Trail are based upon design guidelines of agencies with jurisdiction along the creek corridor. As the trail develops, these agencies will review Mountain View's construction drawings and specifications and issue permits allowing work to begin. The City will also enter into joint use agreements with those agencies who have easements along the creek corridor. The trail alignments, conceptual engineering designs and agencies involved with the development of the Stevens Creek Trail are described in this chapter.

The six miles of creek corridor within Mountain View is divided into five reaches or trail segments. Each reach is planned to begin and end at a developed school or park and connect with City bicycle lanes. These sites provide many needed trail amenities including restrooms, drinking fountains, benches, etc. The use of these facilities will reduce development costs of the Stevens Creek Trail.

Each reach is planned as an operational trail segment that connects with neighborhood bicycle lanes. The reaches can be planned, scheduled and budgeted as separate entities facilitating the design and construction of the entire trail. Each reach will enhance recreational opportunities and improve bicycle transportation. The trail will enable pedestrians and bicyclists to travel to a greater number of destinations as the reaches are completed to lengthen the trail. This chapter details the recreation and transportation impacts of each reach and highlights the connections of the trail to other Santa Clara County trails.

In this chapter, three terms are used frequently throughout the text. These terms, staging area,

access point and nature study area, refer to additional trailside development that would enhance trail accessibility and increase trail use. In most cases, these features have been included in the cost estimates that appear in Chapter 3.

A staging area is defined in this report as a trailside location that provides access to the trail, parking and trail amenities such as restrooms, drinking fountains, benches, etc. Many of the staging areas identified for the Stevens Creek Trail are developed parks or schools located along the creek corridor. An access point is defined as a trailside location that is improved to provide easy access to the trail from neighborhoods or business areas. Access point improvements will include pedestrian bridges, ramps and short trails from City streets to the Stevens Creek Trail. A nature study area is defined as a trailside enhancement that will bring trail users to off-trail locations to experience scenic vistas, flora and fauna or the creek environment. Nature study areas will include decks overlooking the creek, nature observation paths and creek access areas.

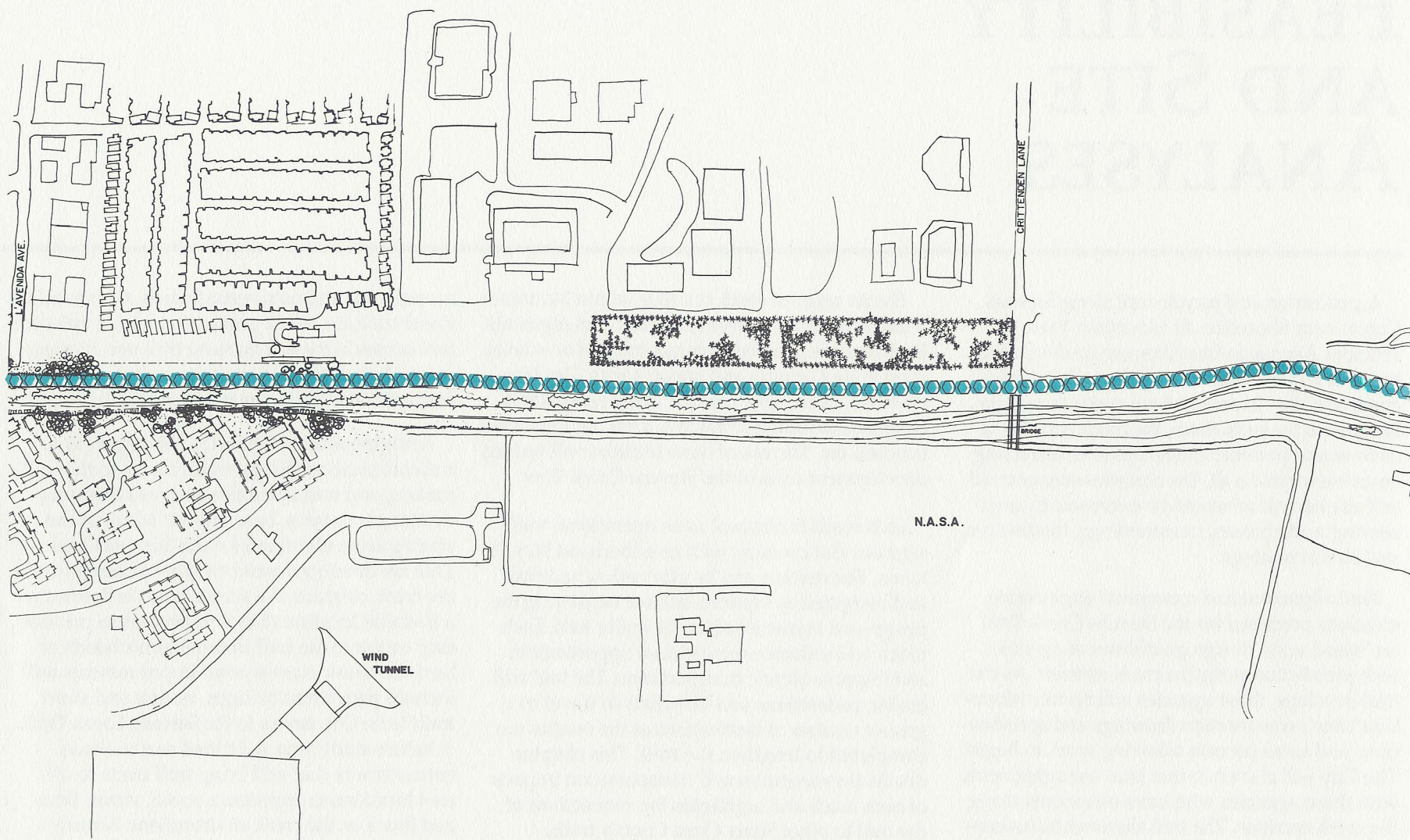


FIGURE 1 – REACH 1: SHORELINE AT MOUNTAIN VIEW TO L'AVENIDA

Feasibility and Site Analyses

REACH 1

SHORELINE AT MOUNTAIN VIEW TO L'AVENIDA

This section of the Stevens Creek Trail and Wildlife Corridor was studied, designed, funded and constructed prior to the completion of this report and is included only to demonstrate the alignment of the entire trail through Mountain View.

Location

Reach 1 begins on the west bank of the creek within Shoreline At Mountain View and extends to L' Avenida. This 1-1/4 mile section of trail travels along the top of a Santa Clara Valley Water District levee. The northern end of the trail intersects both the Association of Bay Area Governments Bay Trail and more than seven miles of trails within Shoreline At Mountain View (See Figure 1).

Trail Alignment

The trail alignment is restricted to the narrow levee surface high above the creek. The trail meanders slightly as it travels through the gates at the end of Crittenden Lane and L' Avenida.

Land Use and Ownership

North of Highway 101 the trail is located on Santa Clara Valley Water District land. A joint use agreement opening the area to recreational use was developed between the City and the Water District. The adjacent lands are used primarily for light industry. One residential area, a mobile home park, abuts the trail. PG&E maintains transmission lines and substations throughout the length of the creek corridor. The North Bayshore area continues to develop and any changes in zoning or building adjacent to the creek should be closely monitored.

Creek Character, Plant Community and Animal Life

The creek is straight and channelized by earthen levees throughout Reach 1. The creek channel angles northeast as it nears San Francisco Bay. Tidal fluctuations through this section of the creek influence the plant and animal communities. A salt marsh community is present between the levees. Pickleweed (*Salicornia pacifica*) and

cordgrass (*Spartina foliosa*) dominate the creek corridor. Dabbling ducks, migratory sea ducks, herons and shorebirds are numerous throughout the habitat. The healthy marsh suggests the presence of two federally listed endangered species, the California Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris obsoletus*) and Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse (*Reithrodontomys ravinentris*).

Future Opportunities

In the original study, "Stevens Creek: A Plan of Opportunities," the trail alignment was envisioned traveling around the edge of an enlarged delta area (Stevens Creek: A Plan of Opportunities, 1980). This delta area was to include habitat islands for birds and resting pools for anadromous fish. If this lower section of Stevens Creek is ever changed back to more closely resemble its original delta formation and to enhance its wildlife potential, the trail could be realigned to take advantage of the scenery in the delta.