

# TRAIL ALIGNMENT - STUDY AREA D

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## **STUDY AREA D MCCLELLAN RANCH THROUGH BLACKBERRY FARM TO STEVENS CREEK BOULEVARD**

### **LOCATION, LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP**

Study Area D includes Blackberry Farm and Golf Course, the Blue Pheasant Restaurant, the Stockmeir property and a crossing at Stevens Creek Boulevard. The 33-acre Blackberry Farm and 5.1-acre Stockmeir property are owned and operated by the City of Cupertino. Stevens Creek Boulevard is a county roadway.

Study Area D is bordered by Stevens Creek Boulevard to the north, Monta Vista neighborhood to the east, Meadows of Cupertino and Scenic Circle neighborhoods to the west and McClellan Ranch to the south. Trails through Study Area D will connect Cupertino park and open space resources to neighborhoods and provide an off-street location for recreational bicycling, walking and jogging.

### **CULTURAL HISTORY**

Captain Elisha Stephens owned and operated his family farm between 1848 and 1864 at the present day location of Blackberry Farm. Stephens was born in South Carolina in 1804 and learned the trade of blacksmithing in Georgia. He later traveled over much of middle and western America. In the spring of 1844, he was selected as Captain of the Stephens-Murphy-Townsend party headed for California. This "wagon train" of 50 people in 11 wagons would be the first party to cross the Sierra Nevada. With the guidance of a Paiute Chief they called Truckee, the party followed a river to a lake which would later become known as Donner Lake. The wagons reached the summit on November 25, 1844. The party left behind a crude log cabin at the lake, which would be used two years later by the Donner-Reed Party.

In 1848, Stephens purchased a 160-acre homestead he called Blackberry Farm on the Arroyo de San Joseph Cupertino, which later became known as Stevens Creek. He farmed the property growing Mission grapes, fruit trees and blackberries. In 1859, he purchased an additional 155 acres. By 1864, Stephens had sold his property, claiming that "it's gittin' jist too crowded, too durn civilized." He relocated to Kern County where he started a small ranch

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in what is now Bakersfield. Stephens died at the age of 83 and is buried in Bakersfield.

In the more recent past, Blackberry Farm was a family-owned and operated picnic facility for 37 years over three generations. In 1991 Cupertino residents passed a 25-year bond measure to purchase Blackberry Farm. The City of Cupertino committed to operating Blackberry Farm as a revenue-generating, self-supporting park for 25 years until 2016. Today, this 33-acre recreational facility offers a creekside park setting for family and group picnics, swimming pools, a 9-hole golf course and conference center. The park primarily serves the needs of organized groups wishing to reserve outdoor picnic facilities for special functions.

In keeping with Cupertino General Plan open space policies, the Stocklmeir property was purchased in 1999. The 1964, 1972 and 1993 Cupertino General Plans have supported the acquisition of the lands adjacent to Stevens Creek to preserve the flood plain as open space and to develop a formal urban trail along the creek corridor. The 5.1-acre Stocklmeir property is the most recent of these acquisitions. This site includes two homes and a 3-acre orange orchard, the only orchard remaining along the entire length of Stevens Creek from San Francisco Bay in Mountain View to the foothills in Cupertino.

### **CREEK CHARACTER, PLANT COMMUNITIES AND ANIMAL LIFE**

Study Area D includes Blackberry Farm and the Stocklmeir site. Suburban development surrounds this study area on all but the south side. Rare, sensitive or listed species potentially existing in the area include red-legged frog, western pond turtle, steelhead and nesting birds of prey. Sycamore-oak riparian vegetation, in-stream habitat, orchard, golf course/park and suburban development are the five habitat types in this study area (*See Map 4 - Study Area Habitat Map*).

A narrow band of riparian vegetation lines Stevens Creek as it flows through Blackberry Farm and the Stocklmeir site. Sycamore and coast live oaks are the dominant trees. Other tree species include California buckeye, black walnut, redwood and non-native pines. The corridor through the golf course has almost no understory or mid-story vegetation layers, which severely reduces the habitat quality of the riparian zone to wildlife. Riparian vegetation becomes very sparse to non-existent at the north end of the golf course. The riparian vegetation corridor becomes wider and much more diverse on the

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north side of Stevens Creek Boulevard where large sycamores, coast live oaks, and buckeyes shade several understory layers.

While the creek is known steelhead habitat, the poor quality riparian vegetation or the complete lack of vegetative cover in this study area reduces the quality of the in-stream habitat for steelhead and the food chain they depend upon. Lack of adequate vegetation cover produces little shade, resulting in water temperatures that are too high for the survival of juvenile steelhead. Sparse vegetation also means the nutrient base in the stream is decreased for insects that feed young and adult steelhead. In addition, riparian vegetation adds large woody debris to streams that forms pools and cover for fish. The in-stream habitat in this area is further diminished by three low flow stream crossings (concrete areas where vehicles drive through the creek channel) and a small dam in the south end of the park. All of these structures are potential barriers to fish passage. Boulders and riprap along the stream banks also reduce habitat quality for adult steelhead.

An orchard is found just south of Stevens Creek Boulevard on the Stocklmeir site. This orange orchard is located in the floodplain and provides habitat for a wide range of species, from resident deer to migratory songbirds. This site may also provide nesting habitat for western pond turtles.

### POINTS OF INTEREST

Blackberry Farm offers a creekside park setting for family and group picnics, swimming pools, a 9-hole golf course and conference center. The park primarily serves the needs of organized groups wishing to reserve outdoor picnic facilities for special functions. However, many families enjoy using the pool and snack bar facilities available to the public.

McClellan Ranch houses the Rolling Hills 4-H Club, Junior Nature Museum, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Friends of Stevens Creek Trail and the community gardens. The original ranch house, milk barn, livestock barn and two historic buildings moved from other sites in the city are found at McClellan Ranch. A replica of the Baer's Blacksmith Shop, originally located at DeAnza and Stevens Creek Boulevards, and the old water tower from the Parish Ranch (now the site of Memorial Park) have been integrated onto the ranch setting. Tours of the farm buildings and Junior Museum are conducted for school children (*See Figure 9*).



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POINTS OF INTEREST IN STUDY AREA D	
<b>Recreational Facilities</b>	<b>Residential Neighborhoods</b>
◆ Blackberry Farm Neighborhood	◆ Scenic Circle
◆ Blackberry Farm Golf Course Neighborhood	◆ Monta Vista
◆ Blue Pheasant Restaurant	◆ Meadows of Cupertino
◆ Stockmeir Site	
<b>Historical Sites</b>	<b>Institutional Facilities</b>
◆ Elisha Stephens Monument	◆ DeAnza College

Figure 9 - Points of Interest in Study Area D

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## SITE ANALYSIS FINDINGS

More than 38 acres of public open space are available for trail development in Study Area D. All of the land in this study area is in public ownership. Blackberry Farm is a 33-acre, city-owned recreation facility. It contains a 9-hole golf course, a creekside park and small conference center operated by Cupertino. The park primarily serves the needs of organized groups wishing to reserve outdoor picnic facilities for special functions. The park and golf course and the Stockmeir orchard are situated in the flood plain of Stevens Creek. Winter flooding is not unusual. In 1997 significant winter rains washed away two of the three pedestrian bridges which connect the parking area on the east bank to the picnic grounds on the west bank of Stevens Creek. These two bridges were replaced with temporary bridge structures in time for the spring picnic season. Three low flow stream crossings (concrete areas where vehicles drive through the creek channel) are also located within the park. These stream crossings are still used to access the picnic areas during event set-up and cleanup. On a busy day, Blackberry Farm hosts 4,000 visitors. The Stockmeir property is 5 acres and contains a residence and orange orchard along the stream banks of Stevens Creek.

A trail connecting McClellan Ranch to Stevens Creek Boulevard through Blackberry Farm and the Stockmeir site is feasible from both land ownership and environmental aspects. However, a trail is not feasible under the current park operations. A number of design restrictions limit the options for providing a trail through Blackberry Farm. The first challenge to the design is the separation of the free trail from the entry fee-based park. The park currently operates as a fee-based recreational facility. All users, individuals to corporations, pay a per person entry fee to use the park. The Stevens Creek Trail is a free recreational amenity and alternative transportation route. All designs within Blackberry Farm entrance area were rejected due to this single constraint. A trail could technically be designed to fit these criteria, but the final product was out of character with the creek setting and the historical context of the farm (See Rejected Alternatives for more detail on these failed solutions). Ultimately, the operations of Blackberry Farm, specifically the fee collection process, must change to create a trail that integrates with the park and provides benefits both to residents and park visitors.

A second challenge specific to the entrance of Blackberry Farm is the need to provide for the safe and effective movement of cars and pedestrians. During the busy summer season 1,100 cars per day can enter and park within Blackberry Farm. The movement of automobiles and of park and trail users must be carefully coordinated.

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A third challenge is neighborhood privacy and security. These issues were addressed in the Scenic Circle, Monta Vista and Meadows of Cupertino neighborhoods. Trail routing and design features are proposed to enhance the security and privacy in these neighborhoods. Additionally, the project was challenged to provide privacy and security to a private residence located within the park. The trail design must work to protect the privacy and security of all neighbors. A topographic survey of the entry kiosk, conference center, private residence, significant trees and entry roads was conducted to develop the conceptual trail and park entrance design in this highly constrained and busy park setting.

A fourth challenge to trail design in Study Area D is the crossing at Stevens Creek Boulevard. Stevens Creek flows beneath Stevens Creek Boulevard between a private residence and the Blackberry Farm Golf Course on the east bank and the Stockmeir property on the west bank. The City of Cupertino owns the property immediately downstream of the Stevens Creek Boulevard. The bridge is elevated above the floodplain and the roadway has not flooded in the recent past. However, homeowners downstream of Stevens Creek Boulevard have experienced localized flooding and streambank repairs have been undertaken by the Santa Clara Valley Water District in this area.

During significant storm events, flooding does occur at Blackberry Farm and the Stockmeir property which are located in the natural floodplain of the creek. The geomorphology of the creek and the design of the Stevens Creek Boulevard bridge pose challenges to developing a grade-separated trail crossing that would allow pedestrians and bicyclists to pass beneath the roadway separate from automobile traffic. An underpass was determined to be infeasible.

### TRAIL ALIGNMENT

The preferred trail alignment extends along the east bank of the Stevens Creek through Blackberry Farm. This route requires a single pedestrian/bicycle bridge to connect the park on the east bank with the Stockmeir site on the west bank. The alignment also includes the reconfiguration of the 8<sup>th</sup> golf tee, removal and relocation of several maintenance buildings and storage spaces and the relocation or reduction in size of the basketball, volleyball and softball fields.

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The Stocklmeir site is situated on the west bank of Stevens Creek. The Stevens Creek Trail is proposed through the Stocklmeir site between the creek and the orange orchard. The creekside alignment provides views into Stevens Creek, but is also in close proximity to the golf course. This route will require enhancement of the riparian vegetation to shade the creek and screen trail users from errant golf balls. Additional screening from golf balls may be required in specific locations along the trail.

The trail would exit the Stocklmeir property between the existing driveway and the creek to reach Stevens Creek Boulevard. Trail users would cross the creek on the existing pedestrian/bicycle bridge. A short section of trail would be built parallel to Stevens Creek Boulevard to extend the trail from the Stocklmeir property to the trail crossing proposed at the Stevens Creek Boulevard/Phar Lap Drive intersection. The Task Force and community supported all of these general trail concepts.

A trail crossing is proposed at Stevens Creek Boulevard. A crosswalk with pedestrian activated pavement lighting and warning signals in either direction on Stevens Creek Boulevard is proposed to connect trail users to the on-street bicycle system. The trail crossing at Stevens Creek Boulevard is required to assist residents living to the north to safely access the trail and to provide a connection to the roadway for bicyclists who must follow the rules of the road which include riding with the flow of traffic. Bicyclists wishing to head west on Stevens Creek Boulevard, toward Foothill Boulevard and Rancho San Antonio County Park, must cross the street to enter the existing bicycle lanes. A three-leg crosswalk with pedestrian activated pavement lighting and approaching traffic warning signals is proposed at Phar Lap Drive and Stevens Creek Boulevard (*See Map 10 - Study Area D Trail Alignment - McClellan Ranch through Blackberry Farm to Stevens Creek Boulevard*).

The crosswalk on Stevens Creek Boulevard will be located on the west side of the intersection to minimize trail users movements. The remaining two legs would cross Phar Lap Drive and the entrance to Blackberry Farm Golf Course and the Blue Pheasant Restaurant. The crosswalk would be complete with safety and traffic calming measures. The crosswalk on Stevens Creek Boulevard would include flashing indicator lights in the pavement identical to those installed at Monta Vista High School. All the crosswalks would be painted a red brick color, similar to the crosswalks near the Cupertino Post Office. Median islands with fencing and pedestrian refuges will be installed in the center of Stevens Creek Boulevard to direct trail users to the crosswalks and to provide some traffic calming in this residential area. Motorist warning lights would also be installed on Stevens Creek Boulevard on both down

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grades that approach the crossing (*See Illustration 1 - Stevens Creek Boulevard Trail Crossing at Phar Lap Drive*). This trail crossing solution maintains the connection to Stevens Creek Boulevard in the most logical location, near the trail exit from the Stockmeir site and close to the local bus stops. It minimizes neighborhood concerns regarding safety, noise and air quality impacts.

The route is proposed as a multi-use, all weather trail open to bicyclists, walkers, joggers, strollers and in-line skaters. The trail is feasible with a change in the fee collection operation at Blackberry Farm. A 10-foot wide path with 2 1/2-foot gravel shoulders was deemed feasible through the 33-acre farm. The trail surfacing could take several forms including asphalt paving, concrete, a pine resin mixed with native soil or other all weather material to be specified during the development of construction drawings. The multi-use trail will support a wide variety of recreational activities and alternative transportation modes. The all weather surface has the lowest long-term maintenance costs. Approximately 0.75 miles of multi-use trail could be developed within Study Area D. A multi-use trail was preferred by the majority of the Task Force members. A narrower, natural surface trail was presented as an alternative to the multi-use trail. This style of trail was supported by some residents. The Cupertino Parks and Recreation Commission supported a multi-use trail constructed of a non-asphalt based surfacing material.

### ACCESS POINTS

Access points provide a direct connection to the trail from neighborhoods, recreational facilities and the public transportation and roadway systems. Study Area D access points are intended to accommodate trail users wishing to reach the trail by bicycle or on foot. Access points are improved and may include short segments of trail, gates, bollards and signage. Access points are identified at specific locations to minimize cross traffic and provide safe access to the trail (*See Map 10 - Study Area D Trail Alignment - McClellan Ranch through Blackberry Farm to Stevens Creek Boulevard*). Trail access is proposed from Stevens Creek Boulevard and Byrne Avenue. Study Area D can also be reached from McClellan Ranch, Blackberry Farm and the Stockmeir site (*See Figure 10*).

### STAGING AREAS



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Parking was a concern of the neighborhoods surrounding the trail alignment. Cupertino has suffered from a significant lack of parking as the population has grown and become further reliant upon the automobile as the primary form transportation even for short distance trips. Parking has overflowed from the local schools as more students individually drive, instead of walk, bike or bus, to school. The traffic congestion and parking associated with Blackberry Farm has been a long-standing concern of the Monta Vista neighborhood. Shared parking has been implemented by Blackberry Farm to handle the overflow of parking when the park hosts large events. On these special occasions, park visitors use the school parking lots during non-school times and are shuttled to Blackberry Farm. Parking has also been a concern at the Blue Pheasant Restaurant and Golf Course. During busy times, patrons were parking in local neighborhoods. Homeowners along the trail route feel that any additional attraction will only add to the already significant parking concern. This concern was relayed by the Meadows of Cupertino Homeowners Association, Scenic Circle neighborhood and Monta Vista neighborhood.

In order to prepare a response to the parking concern, the consultant team evaluated trail use findings from the Stevens Creek Trail in Mountain View and several locations of the San Francisco Bay Trail (Marin, Redwood Shores, and Mountain View) to understand parking demand at similar facilities. Trail use figures and projected figures were also examined for the San Tomas Aquino/Saratoga Creek Trail, Los Gatos Creek Trail and Coyote Creek Trail. In reviewing these reports, it is also important to evaluate the how these trail settings compare to Cupertino.

See Map 10 - Study Area D - Trail Alignment

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Illustration 1 - Stevens Creek Boulevard Trail Crossing at Phar Lap Drive

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The Stevens Creek Trail in Cupertino is surrounded primarily by residential neighborhoods (similar to the Bay Trail in Redwood Shores). It does not link with major transit hubs such as CalTrain, Altamont Commuter Express (ACE) or Capital Corridor commuter rail lines or Light Rail (such as the Coyote Creek Trail in San Jose and Milpitas, Stevens Creek Trail in Mountain View and San Tomas Aquino/Saratoga Creek Trail in Santa Clara). The Stevens Creek Trail will be part of a 54-mile trail connecting the San Francisco Bay to the Pacific Ocean. However, the vast majority of trail users will traverse only short segments of this route. The trail will be primarily used by local residents.

The land uses surrounding the Stevens Creek Trail in Mountain View are residential, high tech/research and development and commercial/retail. There are 30,000 jobs located within one mile of the trail (North Bayshore, NASA/Ames Research Center and Downtown Mountain View) and most of Mountain View's 70,000 residents live within two miles of the trail. Given this setting, it is not surprising to learn that 65% of the trail use is purely recreational while 35% of the use is utilitarian. The trail serves several utilitarian functions. It connects homes to jobs, children to schools and residents to the post office, local shops, medical offices, etc. via an auto-free pathway. It also provides a route to many of Mountain View's recreational destinations, as is the case in Cupertino.

Trail use is generally higher on the weekends than the weekdays. The peak usage periods are from 10:30 AM to 1:30 PM on Saturdays and Sundays and from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM (dusk) on summer weeknights. During a May 1999 weekday, approximately 1,000 trail users were counted over a 14-hour survey period. The following weekend in May 1999, approximately 1,250 trail users were counted over the same 14-hour period. During the peak periods on both days approximately 100 trail users passed the survey point per hour (City of Mountain View, 1999). These numbers might be compared to the Bay Trail in Redwood Shores, a primary residential area. During the peak weekend and weekday periods at Redwood Shores approximately 15 trail users passed the survey point per hour (Sokale and Trulio, 2001).

It is likely that the Stevens Creek Trail in Cupertino will not reach the trail use numbers seen in Mountain View due to the lack of connections to major transit and employment centers. However, it is likely that the numbers will be higher than those experienced at Redwood Shores due to the proximity to the open space lands surrounding the creek and the truly beautiful scenery and vistas afforded by the proposed trail routes.

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Mountain View has conducted numerous surveys on trail use and parking. Throughout these surveys, it appears that approximately 7% of users reach the trail via a car that must be parked at a staging area. The vast majority of users (93%) reached the trail under their own power by walking, cycling, jogging or in-line skating. Parking demand varies by location, but was similar on weekends and weekdays. The parking demand was the greatest at schools that are located directly adjacent to the trail. At two school sites between 20 and 30 cars parked, over the course of the 14-hour survey period, to use the trail. In several locations of lower parking demand between 0 and 5 cars parked during the 14 hour observation period (Meyer, Mohaddes Associates, 2001).

The Mountain View surveys demonstrate that parking demand is relatively small. Incorporating numerous pedestrian/bicycle access points along the trail and providing a variety of staging areas along the route can diffuse the an already limited parking demand create by a pedestrian and bicycle trail.

Staging areas are planned to accommodate those who wish to drive to a trailhead. A staging area provides automobile parking, access to the trail and amenities such as restrooms, drinking fountains and signage. The staging areas in Study Area D are located at existing parks situated along the trail (*See Figure 10*). Additional parking is planned at Blackberry Farm Golf Course and the Blue Pheasant Restaurant.

A staging area is proposed at the Blue Pheasant Restaurant/Golf Course parking area. Currently, this parking area has 84 public parking spaces, 3 staff parking spaces and 4 handicapped accessible parking areas for a total of 91 parking stalls. The abandoned Stevens Creek Road frontage that lies directly in front of the Blue Pheasant is proposed to be formally added to this parking area and the entire site reconfigured to accommodate additional vehicles and a trail connection. Reconfiguration of the parking area could yield an additional 22 parking spaces with the use of a low retaining wall. It is further recommended that 5 of the spaces be designated as trail parking with pavement markings and signs. The remaining new spaces would be incorporated into the Blue Pheasant parking area to provide additional vehicle space at this busy Cupertino location.

### INTERPRETIVE STATIONS

Interpretive Stations are trailside way points that provide opportunities to experience scenic vistas, observe the flora and fauna of the creek

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environment, reflect on local history and/or learn about hydraulic, geologic or biological phenomena. These stations may include benches, overlooks or interpretive signs or monuments. Study Area D includes two historical interpretive stations (*See Map 10 - Study Area D Trail Alignment - McClellan Ranch through Blackberry Farm to Stevens Creek Boulevard*).

The historical monument that details the life of Elisha Stephens is recognized and designated as historical interpretive site. This existing monument is located in the parking area of the Blue Pheasant Restaurant. An interpretive site is also recommended at the Stockmeir site.

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SUMMARY OF STUDY AREA D TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS		
<b>Trail Routes</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Trail Crossings</b>
◆ All Weather Multi-Use Path	<u>0.75</u>	◆ Stevens Creek Boulevard
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.75</b>	
<b>Access Points</b>		<b>Staging Areas</b>
◆ McClellan Ranch		◆ Blackberry Farm
◆ Blackberry Farm		◆ Blackberry Farm Golf Course and Blue Pheasant Restaurant
◆ Byrne Avenue		
◆ Stocklmeir Site		
◆ Stevens Creek Boulevard		

Figure 10 - Summary of Study Area D Trail Improvements

## REJECTED ALTERNATIVES

A west bank alignment which required five pedestrian/bicycle bridges, reconfiguration of the 8<sup>th</sup> golf tee, relocation of barbecue facilities at the Hillside and Sycamore picnic sites and reduction or reconfiguration of the Horseshoe Bend picnic areas was presented. This alternative was rejected from further analysis due to environmental impacts associated with the multiple bridge crossings and neighborhood privacy and security concerns. A pedestrian/bicycle bridge with a gated entry intended to serve as an access point for the Scenic Circle neighborhood was rejected by residents.

A grade-separated tunnel crossing at Stevens Creek Boulevard was rejected due to lack of land availability, environmental impacts and neighborhood privacy and security concerns. A signalized intersection at Stevens Creek Boulevard and Phar Lap Drive was eliminated from further consideration due to neighborhood concerns regarding safety, noise and air quality impacts.

A spur trail connection from Stevens Creek Boulevard to Varian Park was rejected due to lack of land ownership or recreational easements in the area.



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## REJECTED PETITION ALIGNMENTS

On October 2, 2001 the Stevens Creek Task Force received a petition from area residents requesting the equivalent evaluation of alternative trail routes that were not located within the Stevens Creek corridor (*See Appendix H - Request to Study Alternatives Alignments in Study Area D*). This petition was also brought to the Cupertino City Council on October 1, 2001. These route indicated in the petition were ultimately rejected by the Task Force after review of additional information provided on these alignments. A description of the alignments and reasons for rejection are provided as part of this feasibility report.

Three alternative alignments were indicated in the petition. The petition authors were also open to the review of other routes that might be identified by the Task Force, public or consultant team. It should be noted that the goal of the feasibility study was to determine if the Stevens Creek Trail could be developed within the Stevens Creek corridor. A review of the alignments identified in the petition follows.

Alternate Alignment #1 would connect the closed quarry in Study Area B via an on-street route to Rancho San Antonio County Park. This alternate alignment would follow Linda Vista Drive to McClellan Road to Stevens Canyon Road/Foothill Boulevard to Stevens Creek Boulevard to Rancho San Antonio County Park. This alignment is comprised of existing bicycle lanes and routes. These on-street facilities had been indicated on the trail alignment maps since March 27, 2001. These routes would provide an on-street connection should a route through the creek corridor be determined to be infeasible. This alternative route exclusively uses, busy collector streets. McClellan Road offers steep windy grades. This route does not provide access to the Stevens Creek corridor or the approximately 60 acres of publicly owned open space located along the creek.

Alternate Alignment #2 would connect the closed quarry in Study Area B via an off-street route through the privately owned Hanson Permanente Cement to Rancho San Antonio County Park. This alternate alignment would follow existing trails in Stevens Creek County Park to a street crossing of Stevens Canyon Road to an off-street alignment through the privately owned and actively managed Hanson Permanente Cement to an alignment along the active Union Pacific Railroad corridor to Rancho San Antonio County Park. This alignment concept was brought to the attention of the Task Force on July 24, 2001. An off-street connection between Stevens Creek County Park and Rancho San Antonio County Park was explored on lands west of Stevens

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Canyon Road. The lands west of Stevens Canyon Road are located in the City of Cupertino and in the County of Santa Clara. Properties west of Stevens Canyon Road are in private ownership. Large landowners include Hanson Permanente Cement. Haul roads exist through this active quarry. The lack of public land is one obstacle to providing a trail route through the hills. If trail easements could be secured from the private property owners, the current quarry operations in the hills present a second obstacle to a trail route. Heavy equipment traffic is ongoing through these areas. These operations are not necessarily compatible with trail use and public access. A crossing of Stevens Canyon Road also possess significant challenges.

The 1995 Countywide Trails Master Plan does indeed show a link connecting Rancho San Antonio County Park and Stevens Creek County Park. It is indicated in the county trail plan as the DeAnza Trail (Route R1-A). The county trail plan indicates a trail corridor from the southern edge of the San Jose Diocese property through the area of the active quarry to the northwest corner of Stevens Creek County Park. This hillside trail route may become a reality when Hanson Permanente Cement changes functions in fifteen to twenty years.

In addition to the ownership and safety issues associated with an active quarry route, the feasibility of using all or part of the Union Pacific Railroad right of way was investigated by Cupertino as part of the Union Pacific Rail Trail Feasibility Study (Alta Transportation Consulting, October, 2001). This feasibility study which was coordinated with the Union Pacific Railroad indicates that a trail from Hanson Permanente Cement to Stevens Creek Boulevard is infeasible until rail operations desist. The proposed trail alignment does not meet the criteria required by Union Pacific Railroad. In summary, it is unlikely that a trail could be routed through the quarry or this section of the railroad right of way until which time a land use change occurs.

Alternate Alignment #3 would connect the closed quarry via an on-street route to Rancho San Antonio County Park. This alignment was the petitioners' preferred choice of route. This alternate alignment would follow existing trails in Stevens Creek County Park to a street crossing of Stevens Canyon Road to a widened and improved Stevens Canyon Road/Foothill Boulevard to Stevens Creek Boulevard to Rancho San Antonio County Park. This alignment is identified in the 1998 Cupertino Bicycle Transportation Plan (City of Cupertino, 1998). Bicycle lanes have been marked on the pavement from Santa Lucia Road to Stevens Creek Boulevard. However, to date no improvements have been made south of Santa Lucia Road. The City of Cupertino has completed construction documents to widen the roadway

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from Santa Lucia Road to the entrance to Stevens Creek County Park. This construction project would add sufficient pavement to allow for shared bicycle and vehicular traffic (Class IIIA - Shared Roadway). Two 12-foot vehicular traffic lanes and two 4-foot shoulders are planned with this construction project. A Class IIIA designation is indicated where bicycle lanes would be preferable, but are infeasible due to right of way and topographical constraints. No facilities for pedestrians are currently planned in this constrained area. A contract for these roadway improvements was awarded November 19, 2001. The route exclusively uses, busy collector streets which are all traversed by heavy quarry trucks. The route provides no facilities for pedestrians and is likely too challenging for beginner bicyclists and family outings. This route does not provide access to the Stevens Creek corridor or the approximately 60 acres of publicly owned open space located along the stream.

### REJECTED BLACKBERRY FARM ENTRANCE ALIGNMENT

A technically feasible, but heavily engineered and ultimately rejected trail alignment that separates the free trail from the fee-based park was proposed near the entrance to Blackberry Farm. This trail route is documented below for future reference in the development of the Blackberry Farm Master Plan. Although the engineered elements of the trail were rejected, it is hoped that future efforts will learn from this feasibility investigation. Several successful elements of this study might be carried forth into the Blackberry Farm Master Plan. These include the new park entrance with central kiosk and trail access from Byrne Avenue.

The trail extends from McClellan Ranch into Blackberry Farm along the eastern edge of the softball, volleyball and basketball play areas (*See Map 10 - Study Area D Trail Alignment - McClellan Ranch through Blackberry Farm to Stevens Creek Boulevard*). As the trail approaches the existing restrooms and maintenance buildings, the alignment begins to descend in order to provide a grade-separated crossing of the entry road that serves the southern end of Blackberry Farm. This 160-foot section of trail is proposed as an open air, depressed pathway (*See Map 11 - Study Area D - Blackberry Farm Trail Alignment with Depressed Pathway and Tunnel Crossings*).

The collection of maintenance buildings and storage spaces will be demolished and consolidated elsewhere within the park. These facilities may be relocated below the conference center and adjacent to the golf course. This area is less subject to flooding. Public restrooms will be rebuilt in the southern

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end of the park for the convenience of patrons and trail users. The restrooms may be designed to provide back-to-back facilities to serve both park users and trail enthusiasts.

The open air, depressed pathway will be excavated into the ground. The depression of the pathway will vary from 0 to 8 feet. The pathway will be the deepest beneath the two entry roads. The pathway will be 10 feet wide at the base and slightly wider at the top as a result of angled retaining walls. The retaining walls would be faced in stone. Vines would cascade over the retaining walls from planters. A safety fence would be installed on either side of the depressed pathway (*See Map 11 - Study Area D - Blackberry Farm Trail Alignment with Depressed Pathway and Tunnel Crossings - Section 'A' - Adjacent to Private Residence and Section 'B' - Adjacent to Conference Center*).

At the southern entry road the trail is located 8 feet below grade in short, 40-foot tunnel. The depressed pathway is located horizontally 25 feet from the property line of the private residence situated inside Blackberry Farm. The

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See Map 11 - Study Area D - Blackberry Farm Trail Alignment  
with Depressed Pathway and Tunnels

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See Illustration 2 - Stocklmeir Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge at the 8<sup>th</sup> Tee



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elevation of the southern entry road is raised 2 feet to accommodate the tunnel. Upon exiting this tunnel the trail is at-grade for a short distance before again descending toward the northern entry road located near the conference center. This segment of the depressed pathway extends across the highest portion of the sloped lawn area that surrounds the swimming pools. The trail is depressed approximately 5 feet below the elevation of the lawn. It crosses the northern entry road in a second short, 42-foot tunnel near the site of the existing entry kiosk. All of the existing oak trees around the park entrance are preserved with this design.

After passing beneath the northern entry road, the trail is at grade and parallels the conference center retaining wall before jogging north toward the golf course. The entire length of the depressed pathway and two tunnels is 452 feet. The trail extends at grade along the mesh net fencing that separates the park from the golf course. The trail crosses Stevens Creek on a pedestrian/bicycle bridge near the 8<sup>th</sup> Tee to reach the south end of the Stockmeir orange orchard. The bridge will be located 100 feet from the edge of the Meadows of Cupertino property line. The bridge will be sited to avoid impacting the large sycamores that line the creek (*See Illustration 2 - Stockmeir Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge at the 8<sup>th</sup> Tee*).

A trail connection is proposed to extend in the opposite direction toward the conference center. This alignment will connect to Byrne Avenue to provide a neighborhood access point (*See Map 10 - Study Area D Trail Alignment - McClellan Ranch through Blackberry Farm to Stevens Creek Boulevard*). All of the at-grade segments of trail through Blackberry Farm will be fenced from the fee-based park through the use of stone columns and wire screen panels that will be covered in perennial vines. Three foot high wire screen panels are proposed although the fencing height could easily be increased for additional separation (*See Map 11 - Study Area D - Blackberry Farm Trail Alignment with Depressed Pathway and Tunnel Crossings - Section C - Trail Adjacent to Golf Course*).

Several features are added to enhance the privacy and security of the adjacent private residence. The existing stone wall that separates the entry road and the home will be rebuilt as a result of the raising the road 2 feet to accommodate the grade-separated tunnel. The stone retaining wall will be lengthened to provide additional security behind the home. The retaining wall will wrap around the home site to meet the hillside in the rear of the home. The height of the wall along the entry road may be increased 1 to 2 feet depending upon the owner's interest. The height of the remaining portions of the wall will be designed to meet the existing grade of the backyard. The

## TRAIL ALIGNMENT - STUDY AREA D

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nearby maintenance buildings will be removed from behind the home to make way for the trail. The trail will be located 25 feet from the property line. Native trees and shrubs will be planted between the edge of the trail and the property line to enhance privacy and visual appeal. The native trees and shrubs will be selected to fit the homeowner's request. This planting concept is similar to the revegetation proposed along the old haul road in Study Area C. The depressed pathway located in this area will be fenced to prevent park users from entering the trail in undesigned locations (*See Map 11 - Study Area D - Blackberry Farm Trail Alignment with Depressed Pathway and Tunnel Crossings - Section 'A' - Adjacent to Private Residence*).

The entrance to Blackberry Farm has been reconfigured to provide a better sense of entry, more efficiently accommodate park traffic and conveniently route trail users into the park without sacrificing user fees. The existing reservations building is removed and replaced with central entry kiosk similar to those used in county, state and national parks. Two entry lanes and a single exit lane provide for efficient traffic flow. A direct trail route provides a connection to the entry kiosk for trail users wishing to use the recreational amenities at Blackberry Farm (*See Map 12 - Study Area D - Blackberry Farm Park Entrance with Central Kiosk and Trail*).

### HABITAT ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

See Chapter 4 - Study Area C for habitat enhancement opportunities relevant to the restoration of the riparian and aquatic habitats of the Stevens Creek corridor.

# TRAIL ALIGNMENT - STUDY AREA D

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See Map 12 - Study Area D - Blackberry Farm Park Entrance  
with Central Kiosk and Trail

# TRAIL ALIGNMENT - STUDY AREA D

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