

Notes from MRA Matadero Creek Trail Meeting – April 16, 2013

Public Comments:

- Consider safety & privacy in feasibility study
- Make purpose/extent (benefit) project goals – clear. Define objective for project.
- Sound wall at Winder Lodge – should stay.
- How is the feasibility framed? Look at alternatives.
- Children to Middlefield. No easy access from midtown shopping center.
- What is the demand? Partial strategy of route. Gauge demand for local study. What is the final demand number?
- Who is the intended user?
- What are the other solutions? What are the goals or costs? Mixing ped and bicycles is more dangerous.
- What is the alternative or other option?
- Most children go to JLS
- Midtown shops - bicycle access (ride on sidewalk). Make it safer.
- Why wasn't there better noticing? Why does RFP only show creek alignment?
- Can we enter the minutes into the public record?
- Change the title of RFP.
- Robbery problem in the area. Jumping fence. What about Trail curfew?
- What is the extent of the project? Is it a citywide trail system or local trail?
- Bike/pedestrian on same path is dangerous.
- Opposed to lighting. Opposed to 24 hour access.
- Observation: staff is overselling. What is the objective of this trail
- Who will close the gates?
- Intersection crossings are dangerous
- Liability to City – must make safe
- What is demand for use of trail.
- Building half trail/build to hypothetical routes is an issue
- What is Maintenance cost/Cost to the City - to build the trail
- Bridge over Matadero – should connect to Sterling Canal
- What about Cal Ave underpass?
- The most dangerous condition is freeway. Take money to go under freeway.
- What will happen w the zig zag of the creek?
- Crosswalks provide illusion of safety. Creek is ugly. Not really a creek.
- Just because we have the money, do we have to spend it?
- Potential property devaluation.
- Don't feel safe w the bedroom windows near trail.
- Scared for community and kids. Safety of creek. Bike accident where people fly in air. Lit cigarette is fire hazard. Privacy.
- Midtown crime alley. Romantic notion of a trail.
- Need alternative route to compare to.
- Who will monitor/lock gate nightly? Should work with Police.
- Change title to Matadero Flood Control (not creek trail)
- This is a Bridge to nowhere (nowhere to nowhere)
- Crossing freeway is dangerous.

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- Use this money on Adobe Creek Bridge
- Community input based alternative should be part of feasibility study
- Intersection crossings are dangerous..
- Address/propose safety concerns at intersections
- Trails should be policed
- Call it East/West Midtown trail
- Cross-walks at busy intersection are very dangerous – not a good solution. Esp Loma Verde & Colorado crossing.
- Matadero Creek is concrete bed and ugly, not aesthetic
- Provide Alternate/parallel to route on Matadero Creek
- Provide off-road trail vs on-road trail – Provide purpose
- Identify objective of project
- City is spending money to have dangerous crossings at intersections
- Citizens have to add crime protection because of trail project
- Pavement will make skateboarders use trail at all hours/night.
- Water gets very high in winter – dangerous for kids
- Kids sit on wall, bicyclists could fall off and onto the creek
- Littering onto residents' houses a concern.
- Privacy – Passersby will look into houses
 - Bedroom windows are near path

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Meeting Notes provided by MRA: Sheri Furman, Annette Glanckopf and Karen Lawrence

Presentation by Jaime Rodriquez

- Want to hear what should be included in feasibility study, so a better scope of work can be prepared.
- Matadero Creek Trail is part of the city bicycle/pedestrian Transportation Plan; E-W from 101 to Alma. Want to connect it to the Bryant Bike Boulevard.
- Bike plans were approved in July, 2012.
- Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) on't allow lighting along the trail, so it won't be a 24-hour trail. Curfew required by SCVWD.
- City will have to maintain path instead of SCVWD.
- City committed to feasibility study when applying for a grant for the trail; City pays for study.
- 9 months to complete feasibility study.
- If the project isn't feasible, City won't get grant money.
- In response to multiple resident concerns around safety, privacy, crime, etc. City agreed that MITIGATION could be discussed earlier, and put into the FEASIBILITY STUDY. County grant kicks in after the feasibility study, with local match.

Attendee Comments

Notification

- Most had never heard of project.
- Why didn't City notify residents sooner?
- I never got a personal letter, even when a house is built near me I get a letter.
- Jaime: Part of Pedestrian and Bike Transportation Plan. Multiple meetings, and much advertisement. In WEEKLY and in Utility bills.

Costs

- Jaime: Feasibility study will happen. Cost is \$100,000.
- Estimated project cost is \$2.5 million; grant is \$1.5 million.
- Stanford is paying for the Stanford Perimeter Trail. The Grant for the project came from Santa Clara County, which pays for the Matadero Creek Trail.
- How much more money will this cost (e.g. maintenance, monitoring)?

Objectives

- What are objectives? Need to know in order to determine the best way to spend the money.
- Need a conceptual framework, value proposition.
- Jaime: The bike plan wanted off-road trails. People probably didn't think of streets needing to be crossed.
- RFP seems to be only looking at the Matadero creekside alignment.

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- It feels like the City is spending money just because we have it via the \$1.5 million grant and there's a "use it or lose it" attitude.
- The project is a "bridge to nowhere."
- Strategy to build part of trail and hope for the rest is a FLAWED strategy.
- Should use money to figure out how to safely cross under 280 on Page Mill.
- Feasibility study should be more about soliciting community input. Ask "is this a good way of spending money?"
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- Many feel we are stuck with Jaime's vision.
- What is the purpose of the trail? Safety? Aesthetics?
- City is OVERSELLING this.
- According to Jaime, all of the "community" has equal weight in the decision.

Alternatives

- Need alternatives. To have alternatives you must have objectives.
- Thinking of alternatives to the path is critical.
- Concerns for connections to the Midtown Center.
- More important to get overpasses over Alma.
- Consider a bridge over Matadero to connect the Sterling Canal trail from Greer to Loma Verde.
- Must have alternative routes. Project should be called the East-West Midtown Trail because calling it the Matadero Creek Trail limits what's looked at.
- There's a need for some sort of east-west connection, but not along the creek.
- Jaime: The feasibility study will look at alternate routes.

Usage / Aesthetics

- The maintenance path is a trail in name only.
- There is nothing aesthetic about walking along the creek, which is actually a culvert. Not a place where folks would go for a stroll
- The idea of a trail is a romantic notion, but it's really an alley way.
- Aesthetics: "Path" is UGLY – space is between concrete wall and fence.

Safety / Crime

- Consider City's liability; need to understand demand for trail; what are the real costs of maintenance?
- Who will close the path at night?
- Who will monitor fences, graffiti, curfew, etc.?
- Jaime: Feasibility study will include working with PAPD on safety issues.
- Many concerns about trail crossing streets, particularly mid-block. Study must include safety issues.
- Pedestrians and bicycles – not safe for both on same trail.
- Path will be less safe than areas along the street.
- Concerns about bikes crossing streets, especially during rush hour traffic and near El Carmelo. Crosswalks are not adequate.
- At night it will be the Midtown Crime Alley.

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- Who is going to patrol and make sure no one is on path at night?
- People will have to get burglar alarms for their homes.
- If paved, the skate boarders will use this... I already have problems after 10PM with skateboarder noise.
- Skate boards could flip in, sometimes bikes accidents happen when bikes fly into the air...they could go into the creek.
- Who will be using the trail? Teenagers at night.
- Our property - back yard - is very secluded. The kids go around with no clothes. I am very worried about people going by my property. They could see my kids, it is easy to jump over the fence.
- I fear people who smoke might flip a cigarette into my yard and we could have a fire.
- When one considers all the factors, I am scared...there is a whole host of things not considered.
- In the winter when the water is high, it is very dangerous. People will die. kids sit on the ledge. They could fall in or be pushed.
- Install speed bumps and stop lights - not popular with residents.
- Bikes coming out of the blind path - cars won't see them, a disaster waiting to happen.
- Safety and flooding are big concerns.
- This is a bad project with a half a dozen dangerous intersections.
- As a biker, I wouldn't cross mid-block on Middlefield. I always cross at the light.

Other

- Almost everyone in attendance thinks the plan is not a good idea.
- This isn't a green project...people would have to add things.
- Concerns for property values.
- There is a petition to STOP this project.
- Several people want minutes of this meeting – to compare what was talked about to the RFP. City reminds us that this is a COMMUNITY project, not just Midtown. Sheri Furman reminded group that the RFP is on the MRA website.
- Jaime: Will update the RFP based on tonight's comments.
- Suggestion that people should email the City Council with concerns if they are worried about the concerns not getting into the public record.

MRA Role

- Sheri Furman clarified role of MRA – provide information and conversation, not advocacy (even though she herself as a Matadero neighbor has her own concerns).
- MRA will continue to work with the City.

Continued Communication

Send email to shala.yazdy@cityofpaloalto.org

Or to City Council, or to MRA (on website)