



PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Shahla Yazdy **DEPARTMENT:** Transportation

AGENDA DATE: May 31, 2016

SUBJECT: Quarry Road Improvements and Transit Center Access Project

RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests that the Parks and Recreation Commission provide feedback on the updated conceptual design plan for the Quarry Road Improvements and Transit Center Access Project's pathway connection plan.

BACKGROUND

The August 2011 Development Agreement between Stanford Hospital and Clinics, the Lucile Salter Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford, the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University and the City of Palo Alto obligated the City to design and construct enhancements of various pedestrian and bicycle connections between the Palo Alto Intermodal Transit Center and the Stanford University Medical Campus (SUMC). Stanford provided funds for these projects. Specifically, the agreement called for:

- 1) Improvements to Enhance the Pedestrian and Bicycle Connection from the Palo Alto Intermodal Transit Center to the existing intersection at El Camino Real and Quarry Road, including development of an attractive, landscaped passive park/green space with a clearly marked and lighted pedestrian pathway, benches and flower borders; and

The purpose of the project in this area is to provide safe, clear, and directly connected pathway system for travel by both bicyclists and pedestrians from the Transit Center to Quarry Road. The park area is a connection point between the crosswalk at El Camino Real and Quarry Road, El Camino Park, University Circle, and the Transit Center. The existing asphalt pathway is uneven, unsafe, lack of transitional space, and an unsafe interface between bicyclists and pedestrians at the El Camino Real/Quarry Road intersection crosswalk.

DISCUSSION

On April 24, 2016 Staff presented the park concept plan to the Commission. Following the meeting on April 24, 2106, staff has revised the conceptual plan in response to the comment received from the Commission. The following is a brief summary of the comments and responses to each:

- What is the purpose of the project and what is wrong with the existing path and alignment?

The path is currently in poor condition with various abrupt changes in grade at El Camino Real and at the Transit Station.

- Keep existing alignment. Proposed path alternative prevents future use of the park.

The temporary pathway connection has been restored to close to the original alignment with only refinements at the tee intersection with El Camino Real and the exiting sharp turn. These refinements have improved pedestrian and bike flow as well as improved sight lines and stacking at transitions.

- Why so little planting and it does not seem like a green belt?

We have significantly increased the plantings and buffers to truly create a more beautified corridor.

- The signage is too much and too many.

We have opted to keep the two existing directional signs and only add one small low level directional sign at the "Y" intersection to provide some direction. The sign is 3 feet tall and minimal. It is also not focused on just the bicyclists.

- The path does not address pedestrian needs.

The pathway has been realigned back to the original alignment which is heavily traveled by pedestrians. In addition the pathway has now been marked with both bike and pedestrian markings like El Camino Park to indicate the path is a shared use. As indicated earlier the bike focused signage has been removed as well. The plant material has specifically been layered to promote a diversity that is more appealing to pedestrians and bicyclists alike.

- Add benches near walkway path

Three benches have been located on the plan to provide pedestrian rest areas and face into the path and the landscape buffer.

Updated Project Description:

The updated design consists of an 8 foot wide striped asphalt shared use path with 2 foot decomposed granite fines paths on both sides, for a total width of 12 feet. The alignment of the path is largely in the same location yet has been adjusted slightly to provide a smooth and direct transition between the existing El Camino Park bike path, the crosswalk area, and the direct connection to the Transit Center. In short, the pathway successfully increases the pathway flow for both pedestrians and bicyclists alike while taking a route that avoids the existing Oak tree grove, power poles, guy anchors, SFPUC Utility obstructions, and various sightline obstructions, all while taking advantage of the existing open space area. All visibility and pavement markings will be in accordance with MUTCD, Section 9C101 (CA).

Bicyclists and pedestrians are provided with a combination of two (2) existing and one new wayfinding signage at the three (3) key transition nodes to help them navigate to their desired destinations. To address the tendency for pedestrians to take the shortest distance between two points, pedestrians are

provided a separate 2 foot wide decomposed granite fines shoulder along with high visibility shared pathway markings. The entire pathway system is to be lit by LED pathway lights to at least minimum safety standards in accordance with the Highway Design Manual Section 1003.1 (18). The fixtures will match the recently installed park light fixtures and poles.

Landscape planting will be used with the goal of improving the aesthetics at the street frontage and pathway alignment. The landscaping has been designed in a fashion that will create a n ample buffer to the currently unused open space that is reserved for future park uses. The largely native plant material will be harmonious and compatible with the newly installed plants located at the adjacent El Camino Park, but will provide more depth and interest to the pathway user due to the deeper open space adjacent to the path. The plants will be drought tolerant and irrigated with a drip system. The layout will be low accent shrubs, layered in with appropriately sized background material and groundcovers. The views into the area and along the path will be clear, unobstructed, and not create safety concerns and places to hide. The remainder of the area that may be disturbed during construction will be redressed with a 4” thick recycled mulch layer, which is what currently exists now.

Timeline

The tentative project timeline, subject to change, is as follows:

- ARB Review/Approval –June 2016
- Council Concept Plan Approval– June 20, 2016
- Final Design and Construction Document Completion – August 2016
- Council Approval of Construction Contract – Late Summer 2016
- Construction Completion– Spring 2017

NEXT STEPS

Staff will go to City Council on June 20, 2016 for the conceptual plans with feedback received from PABAC, Parks and Recreation Commission and the Architectural Review Board.

ATTACHMENTS

- A–Updated Park Concept Plan

Prepared by:

Shahla Yazdy
Project Engineer, Transportation

Department/Division Head Approval: _____