

## LGCT TO HIGHWAY 9 TRAILHEAD CONNECTOR PROJECT

COMMUNITY MEETING – FEB. 13, 2020

### MEETING SUMMARY – QUESTIONS, RESPONSES, UPDATES

Approximately 31 residents attended the meeting. The following is a summary of the questions and comments raised and the responses from the project team.

Q = summary of question(s) raised

C = summary of comment(s) received

A = response from project team member(s)

\* = Additional information being provided on topic

**Q: How does federal funding impact the project?**

A: The granting of federal funds to the project will add time and cost to the project due to several required studies and checks and balances that will need to be completed in order to remain eligible for the reimbursement of project expenses.

**Q: Can the ramp on the north side of Highway 9 be straightened out to eliminate switchbacks?**

A: Drainage culverts and available right of way constrain the possibilities for the alignment. The project team will investigate further.

\* The project limits defined for this project preclude use of the area adjacent to the off-ramp. The project limits were drawn to avoid any conflicts with a future VTA project at the intersection of Hwy 17 and Hwy 9.

**Q: Has a creek trail connection on the north side of Highway 9 to the LGCT been considered that would follow along the off-ramp configuration and join the trail further north, eliminating the need for switchbacks?**

A: This had not been considered – there are restrictions for being in the Caltrans right of way but the project team will look into this further.

\* The project limits defined for this project preclude use of the area adjacent to the off-ramp. The project limits were drawn to avoid any conflicts with a future VTA project at the intersection of Hwy 17 and Hwy 9.

**Q: Do both the south and north sides need to be constructed now? What would be a reason for not moving forward with one or the other? If it turns out one side could not be built for some reason, would it be possible to proceed with just one?**

A: The goal of the project is to create a bicycle and pedestrian connection between Hwy 9 and the LGCT. Providing at least one connection still satisfies this goal. Originally the project team was going to suggest that if only one connection were to be considered, it should be the south side trailhead connector. The reason for prioritizing the south side connector was that all directions of travel for both pedestrians and bicycles could be accommodated using the controlled intersection at the trailhead. However, there is no need at this point to eliminate either connection point, and the project team will progress both designs to the 65% complete stage.

\* With both ramps designed fully, the project would be a more complete project and is therefore expected to be more competitive for construction grant funding opportunities. At the final approval stage, Council may wish to consider options for phasing the project, bidding one side as an additive alternate, or moving forward with only one connector.

**Q: Hwy 17 SB off-ramp pedestrian crossing at Hwy 9 is unsafe now and this project will be intensifying the ped / bike traffic at this location. What will be done to make this crossing safer?**

A: VTA does have a plan for future Hwy 17 / Hwy 9 interchange modifications which is anticipated to address the safety of the pedestrian and bicycle crossings of the Hwy 17 off-ramps. This project is in the very early stages and is likely to be 7 to 10 years out. Additional back and forth during the discussion brought up the clearing of vegetation to increase sight distance and how quickly that vegetation grew back.

\* The project team will continue to investigate modifications that can be made to the north side trailhead access point on Hwy 9 to improve the safety for pedestrians and bicyclists to access and egress from this trailhead point. Improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing at the SB Hwy 17 off-ramp will be addressed with the future VTA project.

**C: A drawing is needed of both ramps to show sight lines between both proposed trail entry points.**

\* For the 65% design presentation, the project team will develop a plan showing both new trail access points and will demonstrate how adequate sight distance is to be provided.

**Q: The current south side connector alignment pushes away from the slope of the Hwy 9 embankment; resulting in more earthwork than if the connector was constructed along the embankment. Why not keep the trail closer to Hwy 9?**

A: The trail alignment was moved away from the slope and further away from Hwy 9 in order to preserve trees, reduce necessary retaining wall heights, and to create a more pleasant user experience by increasing the distance from Hwy 9. The current proposal also eliminates switchbacks that would need to be used if the trail hugged the embankment slope.

**C: One resident claimed the trees in the area are scrub only and not worth saving; other residents liked the trees.**

**Q: Can new trees be planted to replace the ones being removed? Can more trees be added to the south side to provide screening from the homes on Boyer Lane? Tree types better suited to the area should be chosen (not eucalyptus).**

A: It is likely tree replacements will be included with the project. Further information on this will be available as the design progresses.

**Q: Is north connector ADA compliant?**

A: Yes. All new improvements must meet ADA requirements, which is also the Town's policy.

**C: All accesses to the creek trail should be made ADA compliant, as the ADA population will continue to grow. Compliance with ADA also helps the senior citizen population.**

**Q: During construction, how long will LG Creek Trail access via the impromptu dirt pathway on the north side of Hwy 9 be denied?**

A: It is likely the entire area around the new connector on the north side of Highway 9 will be a construction zone, and access to the area would be restricted while the area is under construction. The design team will look further into the need for specific construction phasing requirements as the project develops.

**Q: Would the connector on the south side be constructed first?**

A: Project phasing has not been determined at this stage of design. As the design progresses and construction requirements are better understood, phasing will be considered.

**Q: For the south side connector, will there be any type of visual barrier proposed to create privacy for Boyer Ln residents?**

A: That topic needs more exploration. Questioner was asked for additional thoughts: Chain link and private fences exist today. Anything is an improvement. Low ramp is better than high. Resident indicated that fixing the holes in the existing fencing would be desirable in order to keep trail users and others from encroaching onto private property along Boyer Lane.

**Q: The proposed location for the trailhead on the north side of Hwy 9 is dangerous for peds and bicyclists. Poor sight distance and fast-moving vehicles on Hwy 9 and from the SB Hwy 17 off-ramp are a dangerous mix. Put the connector ramp at a wider section of sidewalk or move to a better location.**

A: Acknowledged the potential for conflict and that the issue needs to be addressed further.

**Q: On trail level, the north side connector meets LG Creek Trail at a blind spot. A large tree blocks sight.**

A: Connection from the proposed north ramp to the LGCT has been placed further north from where the existing informal trail joins the LGCT and moves it further away from the large tree, providing better sight distance for this connection.

**Q: Can the north side connector be non-ADA compliant?**

A: No. Both connectors must be ADA compliant per federal regulations and also per Town policy.

**C: A proponent of the adaptive community clarified that ADA compliance is not just for physically disabled. It is also for the elderly and special needs community as well.**

**Q: Can stairs be provided at either or both locations in addition to ADA compliant ramps?**

A: This was not included in the project due to budget and space constraints.

**Q: Can the existing LGCT trail be widened at the new connection points? Especially at the location where the north side access meets the trail? The additional width is desired to allow more room for bicycles to maneuver around pedestrians.**

A: Team will explore options as design progresses.

**Q: Can trail be widened under bridge?**

A: Team will explore these options as design progresses.

**Q: Are there any opportunities for trail volunteers?**

A: Yes. One person wants to volunteer as representative of Adaptive community.

\* For volunteer opportunities, please check the Town's website at [www.losgatosca.gov/2416/Volunteer-Opportunities](http://www.losgatosca.gov/2416/Volunteer-Opportunities)

**Q: Where can I find more information on the Hwy 17 / Hwy 9 interchange modifications and the proposed timing of that project?**

A: Team will explore and post information on project website.

\* VTA is in the process of selecting a consultant and public information on the project is not currently available on-line. When VTA project information becomes available, the project team will post the link to that information.

**Q: The project boards for the two Bridge Types show deck options for wood or concrete? Is that a choice that we should give input on? The speaker expressed their opinion that the smooth concrete decking is better - it would be quieter, better for wheelchairs, and would not have tripping hazards like the wood decking.**

A: Concrete typically has lower long-term maintenance costs. The attendees were asked to please place dot on board to vote for the preferred deck material as well as bridge style choice.

\* The Keystone truss and concrete decking received the most dots on the boards.

**Q: Is one of the bridge choices similar to the bridge south of Miles Ave?**

A: Yes, the "Connector" type pre-fabricated bridge is pretty similar to the one installed south of Miles.

**Q: Was a new trail and bridge along the north side of Hwy 9, similar to the one being proposed on the south side, ever considered?**

A: Yes. A connector from Woodland / Wraight to the LGCT was considered. This alignment was not pursued due to proximity of that alignment to existing private property /back yards, and impacts on existing trees and vegetation.

**Q: Can the access/egress from the north side connector at Highway 9 be moved closer to the bridge where the sidewalk is wider?**

A: The project team will investigate the access/egress from the north side of Highway 9 and consider options for moving the trailhead/access point closer to the bridge.

**Q: There was a suggestion to place a prefabricated bridge at the same elevation as the Hwy 9 overcrossing on the south side of Hwy 9 and ramp it down to meet the Los Gatos Trail easterly of the existing trail.**

A: An alignment of this nature could potentially conflict with PG&E sub-station area.

\* To clarify further, the current project area has been defined and does include the area on the southeast side of the Hwy 9 overcrossing. The current project would not allow construction in this area. Additionally, a pedestrian/bicycle bridge at the same elevation as Hwy 9 would require a much longer and therefore expensive structure and the ramp down to the existing

LGCT would most likely require a switchback structure or encroachment into the adjacent PG&E substation area.

**Q: Can fencing be installed beneath the Highway 9 overcrossing on the west side to prevent loitering/settlements in this area and to provide a more secured environment for the users of the connector on the south side?**

A: The project team will keep this request in mind as the design progresses.

**Q: Can signage be added to the LGCT where the new connections are being made to remind pedestrians to be mindful of bicycles? What signage and pavement markings will be used for these new connections? Signs might be of some use to prevent collisions between bicycles and pedestrians who are not paying attention.**

A: The project team will address the signing and pavement markings in the 65% design.

**Q: Will the trees in the areas of the proposed connectors be trimmed and cleaned up with the project?**

A: The project team will explore options for trimming the existing trees as the design progresses.

**Q: Will the bridges have a straight bottom or will they have an arched bottom?**

A: The project team will provide that information as the design progresses to the 65% complete stage.

**Q: What can be done to keep trail users from looking into the homes/backyards of properties on Boyer Lane.**

A: The project team is looking into ways of getting the trail users down to the level of the existing creek grades, which should put the trail users sight line below the existing back yard fences. As the design progresses, sight lines will be considered and options to mediate will be investigated.

**Other comments for consideration by the project team:**

**C: An on-site meeting during the day, with proposed alignments staked / flagged would be beneficial for the community to better understand the project.**

**C: Please show the RW and other constraints on the exhibits – the existing RW lines and utility locations are very hard to see.**

**C: For the south side connector, starting to ramp down closer to University Ave. seems like a good idea to create a nicer environment for the trail user.**

**C: A change in the orientation of the north side connector switchbacks to follow slope contour could be a better fit for the area.**

**C: Consider widening of the existing sidewalk north of Hwy 9 where north connector begins.**

**C: Restore/fix the fencing between Almendra Creek and the new bicycle/pedestrian trail so that trail users cannot access the creek and the private property/Boyer Lane.**