

THE SAN LORENZO CREEKWAY PROPOSED BENEFITS

BUILDING EQUITABLE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

Based on community input for more than a decade, HARD and Alameda County Flood Control & Water Conservation District are proposing to transform the County's existing maintenance road along the San Lorenzo Creek (SLC) channel into an appx. five (5) mile long multi-use pedestrian and bicycle facility, starting at the Bay Trail in San Lorenzo/San Leandro and running through Ashland, Cherryland, Hayward, and onward into the East Bay Regional Park District

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

1. **Increase safe opportunities for biking and walking; Lifestyle changes can** occur when people have safe, comfortable biking and walking facilities that connect to places they want to go. The SLC will lead directly to, or be within a short walk of, 12 commercial corridors, two dozen schools, 3,000 units of multifamily housing (and hundreds if not thousands of single-family homes), four neighborhood parks, and three BART stations.
2. **Increase public health and access to open/green space:** The CDC found that increased access to outdoor and easily accessible places for exercise led to a 26% increase in people exercising at least three days per week. This pathway will provide safe space to walk and bike for health, as well as make it easier for people to reach larger recreation areas, including the Bay Trail, community parks, and eventually the East Bay Regional Park system.
3. **Reduce the risk, number, and severity of pedestrian collisions:** Alameda County is ranked the **fifth worst place for pedestrians in the state** in terms of collisions and poor sidewalk infrastructure (ACTC Active Transportation Plan, 2019). Nearly 40% of pedestrian collisions in the area involves a child or a senior (Transportation Injury Mapping System). This project will create a safe way for people to travel throughout their neighborhoods and between communities without needing to cross as many dangerous intersections or come so close to cars.
4. **Foster community identity:** The Creekway will have many opportunities for community-driven art, places to learn about each area's history and natural environment, and signs that help express each area's identity. Areas along the Creekway can host events and celebrations of all sorts (cultural festivals, local eatery pop-ups or markets, Earth Day celebrations, etc.), including ones that bring people from different parts of the central county together.
5. **Create long-term opportunities for youth employment and civic engagement:** The idea of the San Lorenzo Creekway is not just the infrastructure, but the potential for programs and activities that can encourage use and bring other benefits. Along with the planned bicycle/pedestrian improvements, the Eden on the Move Safe Routes to School Program will create civic engagement, safety and health programming, and youth employment opportunities for nearly 20 schools with the highest needs along the Creekway.
6. **Reduce greenhouse gas emissions:** The Creekway offers opportunities to plant trees and native plants which will reduce greenhouse gases, as well as reduce the need to use a car to get around the neighborhood.

SAN LORENZO CREEKWAY PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: PUBLIC SAFETY TEAM

The San Lorenzo Creekway uses a **community-based framework for public safety** that encourages use of and promotes a positive relationship with this public space by all members of the community.

We have initiated a **San Lorenzo Creekway Public Safety Team (PST)** which has planned a multifaceted safety approach including: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED); Safe Routes to School (SR2S) and youth engagement programs; homelessness advocacy engagement; and the County's Community Assessment Treatment and Transportation (CATT) Team; and others.

Members of the PST have been involved in public safety planning and include Hayward Police & Fire Departments, Alameda County Sheriff's Office & Fire Department, HARD Public Safety, Downtown Streets Team, and Alameda County Public Health (Safe Routes to School).

TYPICAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM LOCAL AND REGIONAL CASE STUDIES

1. How safe are these types of neighborhood trails?

Trails are generally considered to be as safe as the neighborhoods through which it passes. Sometimes better, since they can be monitored and often have pedestrians and cyclists who help support the safety efforts with “eyes on the street”.

2. How does a trail typically affect the privacy of residents living near the trail?

All proposed trail alignments will need to give due consideration to privacy and access to private property issues. It is reasonable to expect that trail routes will be on public property with adequate buffering between the trail and homes.

3. What happens to the crime rate when a new trail is built?

Several studies have shown that increased trail usage reduces crime and loitering. Safety is related to public visibility, exposure, and the increased numbers of persons with cell phones reporting problems quickly to authorities. Criminals typically use motor vehicles for anonymity and range, not bicycles and footpaths. For example, police officials in Mountain View CA have stated at several public meetings that there has been no increase in crime since the establishment of the local trail in question.

Perfect Example: A resident who initially opposed the Stevens Creek Trail in Mountain View

Crime, privacy, and homeless activity are listed as concerns, just as they were on with Stevens Creek Trail. However, once it was put in place there were video interviews with some of the most vocal critics who ended up being some of the biggest boosters and users of the trail. Here's a good example of that: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EaUEuMrxWw>

4. How does the trail affect the safety of school children?

For communities where a trail is in close proximity to a school, the trail is typically planned to provide a safe route to school. In addition to increasing walking and biking to school, trails can provide a safer environment away from motor vehicle traffic. Several Bay Area police departments and school administrations have informally reported that there have been no increases in incidents related to child or school safety because of the trail.

5. Do the trails increase transiency or problems with homeless individuals?

Studies have shown that when maintained, monitored and utilized, public trails tend to reduce the homeless presence. In most cases, the homeless will go where they are not under scrutiny. Camping along a public trail or pathway, such as the Creekway, would expose them to high visibility by trail users and public safety officials. In addition, the SLC Public Safety Team is working now in the advance planning stage to proactively address issues related to unhoused populations and vagrancy.

6. How does the trail affect property values?

Studies performed by the National Association of Realtors and National Association of Home Builders have shown that trails ranked high as an amenity. Many home buyers are attracted to homes with trail access. Real estate listings highlight trails as a selling point. A majority of knowledgeable realtors point out that most buyers and renters today like having a nearby healthful and fun alternative to driving their car.

7. What about litter and the effect on the environment?

Trail users tend to be good stewards of their environment. People tend to take better care of an environment they can see. There is far less dumping of trash in the creek where the trail exists because people are now watching and quickly report any problem.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority- [Fact Sheet on Bicycle Paths](#)
2. American Trails Association: (Article) [Trail Effects on Neighborhoods: Home Value, Safety, Quality of Life](#)
3. Walk-Bike Cupertino: (Article) [Should Neighbors Close to Bike Trails Worry About Crime?](#)