

APPENDIX A

MAINTENANCE & SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

A high standard of management and maintenance are key ingredients to the long-term success of the SCT. The effects of good maintenance can be a highly effective deterrent to vandalism and littering. For success of the trail maintenance and safety, Los Altos should work with the neighboring jurisdictions and the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail.

Though statistics show that trails are generally safe places for people, the City of Los Altos cannot take a complacent stance; the SCT should be proactively managed and maintained.

A.1. KEY MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As the long-term manager of the SCT, Los Altos should identify a key senior staff person that will be designated to serve as the “trail manager.” The following list represents the major tasks of the designated Trail Manager at the city:

- Coordinate future development of trail
- Organize, coordinate and implement trail operations plan
- Develop and implement maintenance plan and ensure adequate funding
- Obtain bids and manage contracts for maintenance and improvements
- Monitor security/safety of the trail through routine inspections
- Oversee maintenance and rehabilitation efforts
- Acquire trail easement and other agreements where applicable;
- Establish consistency in the trail user regulations with other agencies
- Manage and respond to issues and incidents along the trail
- Coordinate Routine Law Enforcement needs
- Assist in coordination of art along the trail
- Act as the local trail spokesperson with the public and elected officials, and respond to the issues and concerns raised by trail users.
- Develop and manage an emergency response system in coordination with local fire and police departments



An existing sculpture at the Fremont Avenue and Grant Road intersection

A.2. DEVELOPING TRAIL REGULATIONS

The purpose of trail regulations is to promote user safety and enhance the enjoyment of the trail by all users. It is imperative that before the SCT is opened, it must include posted trail use regulations at access points. This includes at the proposed over crossing to Mountain View High School, where the trail connects with Fremont Avenue near Highway 85, at the intersection of Fremont Avenue and Grant Road, and near the Grant Road/Homestead Road/Foothill Expressway intersection. Trail maps and informational materials should include these regulations as well. Establishing that the trail is a regulated traffic environment like other public rights-of-way is critical for compliance and often results in a facility that requires minimal enforcement. Los Altos, in conjunction with the police department, may also desire to post penalties for violators. The trail manager should review proposed trail regulations with the city's legal council for consistency with existing ordinances and enforceability. It may be desirable to pass additional ordinances to implement trail regulations.

In general, the initial set of rules proposed for the SCT should stress courtesy and cooperation with others rather than a restrictive set of edicts. Example rules are outlined below:

- Motorized vehicles are prohibited except emergency and maintenance vehicles
- Keep pets on a leash and scoop up after them
- Stay to the right except when passing
- Give a clear, audible warning signal before passing
- As a courtesy to other trail users and neighbors, refrain from loitering
- Bicyclists yield to pedestrians.
- When entering or crossing the trail, yield to those on the trail.
- Help keep the trail clean.
- Exercise caution and obey all traffic laws at all intersections



At this time, it is not proposed to adopt a speed limit or a set of hours for the trail to be opened. Trailheads, however, should be designed with the ability to close them, typically with a sunset to sunrise closure policy. This would apply to the northern section of the proposed alternative. These rules should be posted conspicuously at the major access points for this section of the trail. Development of a trail brochure with a map and trail rules should be pursued. This could be in conjunction with Mountain View.




A.3. PUBLIC SAFETY AUDIT




As part of the planning effort of the feasibility study, the consultant team performed a Safety Audit of the SCT right-of-way. The intent of this audit was to review field conditions from law enforcement's prospective and apply recommended crime prevention methods through environmental design. The corridor was walked the majority of its length, with conditions noted and photographed in the following table.

The Table summarizes the key issues raised through the safety audit, the recommended response, and the location along the trail where the concern was raised.

Table A-1
Study Area Safety Audit and Recommendations

Safety Issue	Recommended Response	Location on Trail
<p>Unwanted Vehicle Access on the Trail The use of the right-of-way for vehicles was noted at the Fremont Avenue/Highway 85 access point.</p>  <p><i>A bollard on the existing Fremont Avenue bridge over Stevens Creek</i></p>	1. Utilize landscaping to define the corridor edge and trail.	All, special noted emphasis north of Fremont Avenue
	2. Use bollards at intersections.	All
	3. Create a Trail Watch program and encourage citizens to photograph report illegal vehicle use of the corridor.	All
<p>Privacy of adjacent property owners This was one of the biggest concerns expressed by neighbors in the public workshops. Concern is that the trail will bring people into areas that have for decades been mostly inaccessible. Trail users will be closer to backyards and homes.</p>	1. Encourage the use of neighborhood friendly fencing and also planting of landscape buffers.	All
	2. Clearly mark trail access points.	All
	3. Post trail rules that encourage respect for private property.	All
<p>Litter and Dumping Some dumping was noted north of Fremont Avenue, some from Highway 85.</p>  <p><i>Litter along a proposed segment of the SCT</i></p>	1. Post trail rules encouraging no littering	All, post rules at access points
	2. Place garbage receptacles at access points.	All
	3. Provide good visual access to the trail.	All
	4. Light the trail, utilizing light shields to minimize unwanted light in adjacent homes.	North of Fremont Avenue
	5. Manage vegetation within the right-of-way to allow good visual surveillance of the trail from adjacent properties and from roadway/trail intersections.	All
	6. Encourage local residents to report incidents as soon as they occur.	All
	7. Encourage an adopt-a-highway program on the adjacent section of Highway 85	North of Fremont Avenue
<p>Trespassing Trespassing through people's backyards is a concern expressed by some members of the public. Based on the existing graffiti on the Highway 85 under crossing, there is evidence of existing trespassing activity</p>	1. Clearly distinguish public trail right-of-way from private property through the use of vegetative buffers and the use of good neighbor type fencing.	All
	2. Post trail rules that encourage respect for private property.	All

Safety Issue	Recommended Response	Location on Trail
<p>Crime Loitering, Attacks, Burglary, was expressed by neighbors at the public workshops.</p> <p>Addressing undesirable existing transient activity should be handled following these recommendations as well.</p>  <p><i>The Highway 85 under crossing needs lights and activity to become a pleasant trail experience</i></p>	1. Manage vegetation so that corridor can be visually surveyed from adjacent streets and residences.	All, special noted emphasis north of Fremont Avenue
	2. Select shrubs that grow below 3' in height and trees that branch out greater than 6' in height for buffer areas.	All
	3. Light the trail at the under crossing and where the trail parallels the street or where most susceptible to crime activity.	At the Highway 85 under crossing and along the street segments of the trail.
	4. Place benches and other trail amenities at locations with good visual surveillance and high activity	All
	5. Provide mileage markers at quarter-mile increments and clear directional signage for orientation.	All
	6. Create a "Trail Watch Program" involving local residents. This could be in conjunction with the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail.	All
	7. Proactive law enforcement. Utilize the corridor for mounted patrol training.	All
<p>Intersection Safety Roadway and trail crossings present a potential safety concern between trail users and cars.</p>  <p><i>Bicyclists wait to cross Fremont Avenue</i></p>  <p><i>Fremont Avenue and Grant Road intersection</i></p>	1. Require all trail users to stop at public roadway intersections through posting of stop signs.	All
	2. Provide high-visibility crosswalk striping and trail crossing warning signs for vehicle drivers at side-streets and driveways.	All
	3. Install signal push buttons at the Fremont Avenue and Grant Road intersection	Fremont Avenue
	4. Manage vegetation at intersections to allow visual access at crossings.	All

Safety Issue	Recommended Response	Location on Trail
Local on-St. Parking  <i>Potential parking restriction location at Fallen Leaf Lane and Fremont Avenue</i>	1. Post local residential streets as parking for local residents only to discourage trail user parking.	All
	2. Clearly identify trailhead access areas.	Access points
Vandalism  <i>Existing graffiti at the under crossing</i>	1. Select benches, bollards, signage and other site amenities that are durable, low maintenance and vandal resistant.	All
	2. Respond through removal or replacement in rapid manner.	All
	3. Keep a photo record of all vandalism and turn over to local law enforcement.	All
	4. Encourage local residents to report vandalism.	All
	5. Create a trail watch program and work with the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail to maintain good surveillance of the corridor.	All
	6. Involve neighbors in trail projects to build a sense of ownership.	All
	7. Place amenities (benches, drinking fountains, etc.) in well used and highly visible areas.	All
Noise  <i>The northern section of the SCT will parallel Highway 85</i>	1. Work with Caltrans to install sound walls along the northern section of the alignment where adjacent to Highway 85.	North of Fremont Avenue

A.4. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT WITH TRAIL SAFETY

Creating a safe trail environment goes beyond law enforcement officers and should involve the entire community. The most effective and most visible deterrent to illegal activity on the SCT is the presence of legitimate trail users. As a general pattern, introducing legitimate use on the SCT right-of-way will

drive out illegitimate use. Getting as many “eyes on the corridor” is a key deterrent to undesirable activity on the SCT. There are several components to accomplishing this as outlined in this section.

Provide Access to the Trail

Wherever feasible, public access to the trail has been provided. Access points should be inviting and signed so as to welcome the public onto the trail. This includes on the northern section of the trail as well as where there are adjacent roadways.

Good visibility from adjacent neighbors

Neighbors adjacent to the trail potentially provide 24-hour surveillance of the trail and can become the city’s ally. Though some screening and setback of the trail is needed for privacy of adjacent neighbors, complete blocking out of the trail from neighborhood view should be discouraged. This eliminates the potential of neighbor’s “eyes on the trail,” and could result in a “tunnel effect” on the trail.

High level of maintenance

A well maintained trail sends a message to the public that the community really cares about this place. This message discourages undesirable activity along the trail.

Programmed events

Events along the trail will help increase public awareness of the SCT and thereby bring more people to the trail. The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail can help initiate numerous public events along the trail in an effort to raise public awareness and increase support for the trail. Events might include a daylong trail clean up or a series of short walks led by long time residents or local politicians. The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail can also assist the city with public support for future funding applications.

Community projects

The support generated through the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail could be further capitalized by involving neighbors and friends of the trail in a community project. Ideas for community projects include volunteer planting events and art projects. These community projects are the strongest means of creating a sense of ownership along the trail that is perhaps the strongest single deterrent to undesirable activity along the trail.

Infrastructure for public safety

This might include physical improvements along the trail such as emergency call boxes. Infrastructure for public safety is expensive and no conclusive proof exists that these devices are effective at reducing crime or improving police response time. In the few instances where they have been installed, vandalism has often been a problem. As a general rule, infrastructure should be considered as a final line of defense against safety issues on a trail.

Adopt-a-Trail Program:

Businesses and residential communities abut the SCT. As neighbors to the trail, they often see the benefit of their involvement in the trail development and maintenance. Businesses and developers may view the trail as an integral piece of site planning and be willing to take on some level of responsibility for the trail. Creation of an adopt-a-trail program should be explored to capitalize on this opportunity and build civic pride. The adopt-a-trail program could include an adopt-a-creek component that works with the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail to keep the Creek clean from garbage as well as natural materials such as tree limbs and leaves.

A.5. TRAIL WATCH PROGRAM

A.5.1. Safety Inspections

Regular inspection of the trail and associated amenities is a key factor to trail safety. Daily visual inspections should be conducted by Los Altos or the Police Department and can help identify and correct problems before they become an issue. For example, a fallen tree limb can be readily removed from the trail or coned off to divert trail users away from the hazard until such time as maintenance crews address the problem. The City of Mountain View has a trail closure hotline and Los Altos should work with its neighboring jurisdiction on sharing the hotline or establish its own.

A written record of inspections is recommended and will help create a database of information that can assist Los Altos in several ways. Written records can reveal safety trends and use patterns that can assist the city with prioritizing of maintenance dollars. Written records also can help protect the city from potential liability, providing documentation of diligent maintenance practices targeted towards protection of the public. A typical inspection record should include:

- Daily inspection reports noting any hazards that have been found along the trail along with remedial action. This should note basic items such as debris found on the trail or other trail obstructions
- Monthly inspections should be conducted of the entire trail. These inspections should document the condition of the trail and notes should be made of any potential hazards on the trail (cracks, erosion, overhead vegetation, etc.). Corrective actions should be integrated into the next 30-day work plan.
- Quarterly visual and operational inspections should be made of all of the park amenities such as benches, signage, drinking fountains, bike racks, and signals. Recommended corrective actions should be made and be integrated into a 3-month maintenance work plan.

A.5.2. Trail Closure

The SCT should be closed if any heavy equipment is expected to use the trail, or when any maintenance or construction activities are occurring that could be injurious to the general public. Los Altos should take appropriate measures to notify the public of closure of the segment of trail and arrange detours where appropriate.

A.6. CORRIDOR MAINTENANCE

A high level of trail maintenance is critical to the overall success and safety of the SCT. It includes such activities as pavement stabilization, landscape maintenance, facility upkeep, sign replacement, fencing, mowing, litter removal, painting, and pest control. The effects of a good maintenance program are not limited to the physical and biological features of the trail:

- A high standard of maintenance is an effective way of helping advertise and promote the trail as a local and regional recreational resource;
- The psychological effects of good maintenance can be an effective deterrent to vandalism, litter, and encroachments;

- Good maintenance is necessary to preserve positive public relations between the adjacent land owners and public agencies;
- Good maintenance can help make enforcement of regulations on the trail more efficient. Local clubs and interest groups will take pride in “their” trail and will be more apt to assist in its protection.
- A proactive maintenance policy will help improve safety along the trail.

A successful maintenance program requires continuity and often times a high level of citizen involvement. Regular, routine maintenance on a year-round basis will not only improve trail safety, but will also prolong the life of the trail. Maintenance activities required for safe trail operations should always receive top priority.