



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Meeting: September 15, 2020

Subject

Presentation on the 2020 Blackberry Farm Entrance Road (Entrance Road) Improvements Feasibility Study Report and request that the City Council endorse an alternative to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to Blackberry Farm for environmental review

Recommended Action

Endorse an alternative to improve pedestrian and bicycle visitor access improvements to the Blackberry Farm Entrance Road for review under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Background

The entrance to Blackberry Farm from San Fernando Avenue is a narrow driveway that is shared by pedestrians, bicycles and motor vehicles. Dedication of City owned property at 10301 Byrne Avenue immediately adjacent to San Fernando Avenue would add public space along the Blackberry Farm Entrance that could be used to widen the road for a pedestrian path and other improvements. These improvements would increase safety for visitors to Blackberry Farm and would be a link to the existing segments of the Stevens Creek Corridor Trail system.

In 2006, the City adopted the Stevens Creek Corridor Park Master Plan Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (Master Plan). This Master Plan recommended numerous improvements within Blackberry Farm, including improvements to the Entrance Road. The Master Plan provided a conceptual design to enhance access to the park by constructing a switchback boardwalk pedestrian path, linking the area at 10301 Byrne Avenue to the Blackberry Farm Retreat Center and pool complex.

In 2016, the City developed alternatives to update the Master Plan, which proposed, as a potential alternative to the boardwalk-style pedestrian path, a walkway along the north side of San Fernando Avenue which consisted of retaining the slope with a wall and constructing a new sidewalk along the north edge of the driveway.

The proposed pedestrian path would require the addition of 1,960 square feet (sf) of land along the south side of 10301 Byrne Avenue to the existing right-of-way. On December

19, 2017, the City Council adopted Resolution 17-120 to facilitate the purchase of 10301 Byrne Avenue. On December 21, 2017, the City took title to the property.

Improvement of the Entrance Road is ranked in the 2016 Cupertino Bicycle Transportation Plan (Bike Plan) as a Tier 3 project (42 points out of a possible 100) and in the 2018 Cupertino Pedestrian Transportation Plan (Pedestrian Plan) as a Tier 2 Sidewalk project (55 points out of a possible 100). These rankings are moderate relative to other bike and pedestrian projects envisioned in the Bike and Pedestrian Plans.

From 2008 to the present, the City has not received any formal reports of accidents or near misses at or in the vicinity of the Entrance Road from San Fernando Avenue.

The Department of Parks and Recreation initially proposed the Blackberry Farm Entrance Road Improvements Feasibility Study (Study). On June 18, 2019, the City Council appropriated \$75,000 for the Study as part of the FY 2019-2020 Capital Improvement Program Adopted Budget. In October 2019, the City selected Underwood & Rosenblum, Inc. from a pre-qualified list of engineering consultants to conduct the Study. The final version of the Study, dated August 2020, is included as Attachment A.

Discussion

The Study identified and evaluated five alternative alignments to improve pedestrian and bicycle visitor access to Blackberry Farm. These alternatives and their estimated costs are listed below. The Alternatives Comparison Table (Attachment B) shows the estimated cost of each alternative, which ranges from \$2.1M to \$3M for design, construction, project management, and contingencies, but excludes the cost of utility relocations. The Study also rated the alternatives by how effectively they enhance safety, the number of trees removed, impacts to vehicular traffic, and constructability.

Alternative A (\$2.1M):

Consists of the following access alignments (from north to south)

- 10-foot wide detached accessible pedestrian path north of the Entrance Road
- 10-foot wide downhill shared bike and vehicle lane
- 10-foot wide uphill vehicle lane
- 5-foot wide uphill bike lane

Alternative B (\$2.2M):

Consists of the following access alignments (from north to south)

- 14-foot wide detached accessible pedestrian and bicycle path north of Entrance Road
- 10-foot wide downhill shared bike and vehicle lane
- 11-foot wide uphill shared bike and vehicle lane

Alternative C (\$2.2M):

Consists of the following access alignments (from north to south)

- 10-foot detached accessible pedestrian path north of Entrance Road
- 5-foot wide uphill bike lane along the northside of the Entrance Road
- 10-foot wide downhill shared bike and vehicle lane
- 10-foot wide uphill vehicle lane

Alternative D (\$3.0M):

Consists of the following access alignments (from north to south)

- 10-foot wide detached accessible pedestrian path north of Entrance Road
- 10-foot wide uphill and downhill bike lane
- A signalized one-way 10 to 12-foot wide uphill and downhill vehicle lane

Alternative E (\$2.5M):

Consists of the following access alignments (from north to south)

- 5-foot wide sidewalk attached to the roadway
- 10-foot wide downhill shared bike and vehicle lane
- 10-foot wide uphill shared bike and vehicle lane.

Alternatives A and B received the highest overall ratings based on cost, safety and impact on traffic. Of these two alternatives, Alternative B has the easiest constructability and required the least number of trees to be removed. For these reasons, the Parks and Recreation Commission and attendees of the public meeting on February 12, 2020 preferred Alternative B.

In the future, if the project is authorized and funded, staff will proceed at that time with the environmental review and required land dedication from the south side of 10301 Byrne Avenue to the existing right-of-way. Alternatively, if the 10301 Byrne Avenue property is considered for sale, the environmental review and land dedication would occur prior to the property being sold. No funding for design or construction is being requested at this time.

Community Outreach and Engagement

The City conducted community outreach during the Study process:

- On February 12, 2020, a public meeting was held to introduce the five alternatives to the community. The meeting was noticed on the City's website, the City Channel, Radio Cupertino, Cupertino social media outlets, and NextDoor. Additionally, flyers were posted at Blackberry Farm entrances, Cupertino Safe Routes to Schools groups were notified, and notices were hung on the front doors of residences along San Fernando Avenue, Byrne Avenue, and Scenic Circle. The City's Study web page was updated with outreach materials, meeting presentations, and meeting summaries (www.cupertino.org/BBFEntranceRoad).

- On February 19, 2020, a majority vote (4 to 1) of the members of the Bicycle Pedestrian Commission endorsed Alternative B and recommended that the City Council accept the Study.
- On March 5, 2020, the Parks and Recreation Commission unanimously endorsed Alternative B and recommended that the City Council accept the Study.

After the March 5, 2020 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, the Shelter-in-Place orders established by the County went into effect, which delayed finalization of the Study.

On September 8, 2020 letters were sent out to residents that attended the February 12, 2020 meeting and to homes along San Fernando Avenue, Byrne Avenue, and Scenic Circle. The purpose of the letter was to advise these residents of this agenda item being considered by Council on September 15, 2020.

Land Dedication

Each alternative for the Entrance Road would require a dedication of a strip of land along the south side of 10301 Byrne Avenue (see Attachment C). The dedication would be approximately 1,960 sf and would reduce the lot size of 10301 Byrne Avenue from 17,356 sf to 15,396 sf. The dedication would not require demolition of any structures. Because 10301 Byrne Ave is larger than the average lot size of the surrounding neighborhood, the reduction in property area is not expected to severely affect the functionality or market value of the property. If the Council endorses an alternative from the Study for a future Entrance Road Improvement project, which would include environmental review, the dedication of the portion of 10301 Byrne Avenue would be part of the project to be reviewed for its environmental impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Sustainability Impact

The project would be consistent with General Plan policies promoting sustainability, including *Community Vision 2015-2040* Policy M-1.3: Regional Trail Development; Policy M-2.3: Connectivity; and Policy M-5.3: Connections to Trails.

Climate Action Plan Measure C-T-1 is Bicycle and Pedestrian environment enhancements. This measure continues to encourage multi-modal transportation, including walking and biking, through safety and comfort enhancements in the bicycle and pedestrian environment. Bicycle and pedestrian enhancements support safe and comfortable biking and walking environments, potentially increasing local bicycle trips and foot traffic to retail establishments and businesses, while decreasing automobile trips and emissions.

CEQA

Endorsement of an alternative Entrance Road project for review is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under 14 C.C.R. Section 15061(b)(3) (no potential for causing a significant effect on the environment). Approval of a specific Entrance Road

project, including the dedication of a portion of 10301 Byrne Avenue, would require further environmental review.

Fiscal Impact

Council appropriated \$75,000 for the Study on June 18, 2019 as part of a FY 2019-2020 Capital Improvement Plan Adopted Budget. Only endorsement of one of the alternatives is recommended and no additional budget for design or construction is being requested at this time. No additional fiscal impact will occur through the endorsement of an alternative.

Prepared by: Chad Mosley, Assistant Director of Public Works

Reviewed by: Roger Lee, Director of Public Works Department

Approved for Submission by: Dianne Thompson, Assistant City Manager

Attachments:

- A - Blackberry Farm Entrance Road Improvements Feasibility Study Report dated August 2020
- B - Alternatives Comparison Table and Diagrams
- C - Legal Description and Plat Map of potential dedication of land from 10301 Byrne Avenue for public right-of-way
- D - Meeting Notification Letter to Residents dated September 8, 2020