



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 03/03/2020

ITEM NO: 4

DATE: February 26, 2020
TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Approve the Preliminary Design and Authorize Preparation of the Final Design for the Los Gatos Creek Trail to Highway 9 Trailhead Connector Project 18-832-4505

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the preliminary design and authorize preparation of the final design for the Los Gatos Creek Trail to Highway 9 Trailhead Connector Project 18-832-4505.

BACKGROUND:

The Trailhead Connector Project is included in the 2019/2020 – 2023/2024 Capital Improvement Program and is included as one of the projects identified in the Town-wide Connect Los Gatos Program.

On March 7, 2017, the Town Council adopted the Town of Los Gatos Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Included in the Master Plan as a high priority bike recommendation was the construction of a direct bicycle and pedestrian connection to the Los Gatos Creek Trail from Highway 9.

In June of 2017, Council authorized an application for funding for the design of the project from the non-competitive One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) Cycle II funding, which was subsequently granted. Also, in June of 2017, the Town Council authorized the release of a request for proposals (RFP) for engineering design services for the project. On September 16, 2019 after a thorough evaluation process, the Town Council awarded a consultant services contract to Mott MacDonald Group, Inc. for the design and preparation of the project design documents for the Los Gatos Creek Trail to Highway 9 Trailhead Connector Project.

PREPARED BY: LISA PETERSEN
Assistant Director of Parks and Public Works/Town Engineer

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, Finance Director, and Parks and Public Works Director

SUBJECT: Approve the Preliminary Design and Authorize Preparation of the Final Design for the Los Gatos Creek Trail to Highway 9 Trailhead Connector Project 18-832-4505

DATE: February 26, 2020

BACKGROUND (continued):

Following development of the preliminary project design by Mott MacDonald Group, staff presented the design to the Complete Streets and Transportation Commission (CSTC) at its February 13, 2020 meeting. At the meeting, the Commission unanimously voted to support a recommendation to the Town Council to approve the preliminary design.

Although funding for construction of the project has not yet been identified, on November 19, 2019, the Town Council authorized the Town Manager to submit a grant proposal to receive construction funding through the upcoming Measure B program. The application will be submitted at the end of March.

DISCUSSION:

Preliminary Design Components

The preliminary design proposes bicycle and pedestrian connections on both the north and south sides of Highway 9. Key components of the preliminary design for the south side connector include:

- Trailhead located at the intersection of University Avenue and Highway 9, allowing users to travel to or from the LGCT in any direction using the control of the signalized intersection.
- Construction of a gently sloping ramp meeting Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requirements using a series of ramped sections with intermittent landings.
- Installation of a prefabricated bicycle/pedestrian bridge to cross Los Gatos Creek, with two bridge design options presented for consideration.
- Retaining structures as necessary to support trail along embankment of Highway 9.
- Removal of approximately three trees.

Key components of the preliminary design for the north side connector include:

- Trailhead at the back of sidewalk on Highway 9.
- ADA compliant switch back structure using a series of gently sloping segments with intermittent landings.
- Connection to the existing trail at a location north of the existing Hwy 9 overcrossing.
- Retaining structures as needed for the switchback structure.
- Removal of approximately 13 trees.

PAGE 3 OF 5

SUBJECT: Approve the Preliminary Design and Authorize Preparation of the Final Design for the Los Gatos Creek Trail to Highway 9 Trailhead Connector Project 18-832-4505

DATE: February 26, 2020

DISCUSSION (continued):

Public Outreach

Public outreach for the project used the following methods from the Connect Los Gatos Public Outreach Engagement Plan toolbox:

- 450 direct public notice mailings
- Flyers posted on Los Gatos Creek Trail (LGCT), Oak Meadow Park, and hand delivered to local businesses
- Discussion with CSTC, Parks Commission, and Safe Routes to School
- Los Gatos School Newsletter
- Multiple social media posts: Nextdoor, PPW Facebook, and Twitter
- Community meeting

The Connect Los Gatos Engagement Plan will be discussed as a separate agenda item at the March 3, 2020 Town Council meeting.

Approximately 31 people, including CSTC Commissioners, attended a community meeting on February 13, 2020. Those in attendance were supportive of the project and provided valuable feedback on the project components and design.

During the community meeting, staff emphasized that the goal of the project was to provide a useful, desirable, and cost-effective bicycle and pedestrian connection between Highway 9 and the Los Gatos Creek Trail that will advance the goals of the Town's Connect Los Gatos Program, the General Plan, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. The project team provided a PowerPoint presentation that discussed the project background, proposed project layout and other key elements, next steps, and the anticipated schedule. The PowerPoint for the presentation can be found on the project webpage www.LosGatosCA.gov/LGCTHwy9. Display boards showing the proposed layouts (Attachment 1) and bridge design options were placed around the Council Chambers to facilitate continued discussions following the presentation. The images from the project display boards are also posted on the project webpage.

Following the presentation, the project team fielded questions and comments from the community members in attendance. A listing of specific questions and comments raised at the community meeting, along with responses from the project team, can be found on the project webpage. The topics of discussion regarding the project at the meeting included:

- Provide adequate sight distance for new connections to the existing LGCT.

SUBJECT: Approve the Preliminary Design and Authorize Preparation of the Final Design for the Los Gatos Creek Trail to Highway 9 Trailhead Connector Project 18-832-4505

DATE: February 26, 2020

DISCUSSION (continued):

- North side connection point and switchbacks – ensure a safe connection from HWY 9 and investigate the possibility of less switchbacks by providing a more northerly connection point to the creek trail.
- Safety of pedestrian and bicycle crossing of Highway 17 offramps (to be addressed with future VTA interchange project).
- Investigate the need for proceeding with north side connection (to stay competitive for grant funding a complete project with connections on both sides of HWY 9 needs to be submitted).
- Prefabricated bridge types and decking – a keystone truss design with concrete decking was the preferred option by the majority of those in attendance (Attachment 2).
- Investigate the potential to reduce retaining wall height and screen for adjacent residences on Boyer Lane.
- Review possibility of reinstallation or repair of existing fencing along south side of project area.

Next Steps

Should Council approve the preliminary design, the project team will continue to address the comments and input from the community and will move the project forward to the 65% design completion stage. At that point, a presentation at the CSTC and another community meeting will be held to review the 65% complete design and obtain additional input and feedback before moving into the final design of the project.

As the project includes federal funding and is to be constructed within the Caltrans right of way, the design process must follow federal guidelines in order to remain eligible for funding reimbursement. The project must include Caltrans reviews and final approvals prior to project construction. Environmental clearances and Caltrans reviews at the 35%, 65%, and 95% complete stages will be required. These clearances and reviews may require design modifications or additional elements be incorporated into the design as it progresses. Caltrans approval of the final design will be required before the final project can be taken to the Town Council for approval and authorization to advertise and bid the project. Staff anticipates obtaining Caltrans clearances by January of 2021 and subsequently returning to the Town Council for approval of the final design in February of 2021, pending the availability of funding for the construction of the project.

As the project progresses, updates will continue to be posted to the project webpage.

PAGE 5 OF 5

SUBJECT: Approve the Preliminary Design and Authorize Preparation of the Final Design for the Los Gatos Creek Trail to Highway 9 Trailhead Connector Project 18-832-4505

DATE: February 26, 2020

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends moving the design for both the south and north side trail connections forward to the 65% completion stage, with the additional considerations as outlined above.

Approving the preliminary design and authorizing the project to move forward to final design will allow the Trailhead Connector Project to move the Town closer to the completion of one of the major priority improvements identified in the Town's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and the Connect Los Gatos Program. Additionally, by progressing the design work, it is anticipated that the Trailhead Connector Project will become more competitive for construction funding in the upcoming Measure B call for projects.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No additional Council fiscal action is anticipated for completion of the project through final design.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

The consultant team will lead CEQA process for the Town and will provide the studies and documents necessary to complete the CEQA and NEPA clearances for the Los Gatos Creek Trail to Highway 9 Trailhead Connector Project.

Attachments:

1. Trail Connector Exhibit
2. Selected Bridge Design