



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

DATE: August 3, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Mike Pugh, Contract City Engineer

SUBJECT: Receive an Update on the Tuolumne Heritage Trail (Gold Rush Path) Project, Accept Public Comment and Select a Locally Preferred Project Alternative.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider Selecting a Locally Preferred Project Alternative for the Tuolumne Heritage Trail (Gold Rush Path) Project.

BACKGROUND:

The Tuolumne Heritage Trail (Gold Rush Path multi-use trail) project is a premier project in Tuolumne County. The Phase 1 project includes the segments of trail that runs through the City of Sonora that will provide a multi-use trail along two separate alignments. The first alignment runs along State Route 49 (Stockton Road), which starts near the Mother Lode Fairgrounds picking up the planned trail coming from Jamestown to the south and extending north to the newly constructed Transit Center and downtown area. The second segment runs from the intersection of Stockton Road and Woods Creek Drive and extends west to the Dragoon Gulch trail head and Sonora High School.

The Project Approval / Environmental Documentation (PA/ED) effort for the Phase 1 project has been ongoing since August of 2024 and is nearly complete. Activities to date on this project have included:

- 1) Development of the Trail Design and Engineering Documents (Plans, and Engineers Estimate)
- 2) Development and Approval of the Environmental Technical Studies
- 3) Development of the Draft Environmental Document (DED)
- 4) Field Activities in support of Project Engineering and Environmental Documents
- 5) Public Outreach Activities to Promote the Project and Solicit Input

Alternatives:

At the location where the Tuolumne Heritage trail is proposed to be constructed in the Woods Creek Rotary Park, there is a pinch point between Woods Creek and the Little League baseball field that does not provide adequate width for the trail. To resolve this conflict point, the City has developed two trail alignments. Alternative 1 would relocate the right field little league baseball field fence approximately 5-10 feet to the east to accommodate trail construction. The reduction of the right field length would be mitigated by increasing the fence height at this location. Alternative 2 would construct a retaining wall adjacent to Woods Creek to provide the width needed to



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construct the trail without impacting the baseball field. This alignment would add approximately \$500,000 to the cost of the project.

The preliminary (30%) design and draft environmental document were released for public review on July 15, 2026. The public review process will be completed on August 15, 2026. After receipt of the public comments, the comments will be addressed, the engineering documents will be updated as necessary, and the Final Environmental Document (FED) will be prepared and submitted to Caltrans for approval.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

Derek Kirkland and Tim Chamberlain from Wood Rodgers will present the project details and environmental findings of the Tuolumne Heritage Trail (Gold Rush Path) Phase 1 project. Wood Rodgers is the engineering consultant for Phase 1 of the project.

This presentation and meeting are not intended to be a formal public hearing but instead an informal project development discussion. Verbal public comments will be invited, however, only formal written comments will be addressed in the preparation of the final CEQA document. Comment cards will be available.

This project is a Caltrans oversight project with the City of Sonora as the Project Proponent. The Caltrans Project Development Team (PDT)- of which the City, TCTC, and Wood Rodgers are participating, will ultimately decide which alternative to select; however, that selection decision takes into consideration local preferences since it will be City residents that ultimately use the facility. As such, staff is requesting that the City Council recommend a locally preferred project alternative for the Tuolumne Heritage Trail (Gold Rush Path) Phase 1 project, while also taking into consideration public comments received at this meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is an information and education item presenting the progress of the Tuolumne Heritage Trail (Gold Rush Path) Phase 1 Project and a venue for the public to make comments on the proposed project. The PA/ED effort has been funded through a combination of Active Transportation Program (ATP) and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. The Final Design and Right of Way acquisition effort will also be funded through a similar combination of funds.

ATTACHMENTS:

Tuolumne Heritage Trail (Gold Rush Path) Phase 1 Design (full project)
PowerPoint Presentation of Project and Design Alternatives

CORE COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Fiscal Responsibility and Stability, Infrastructure and Engineering