



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Jon Cicirelli

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: February 27, 2023

Approved

Date

3-8-23

COUNCIL DISTRICT: #3, 6, 9

SUBJECT: GUADALUPE RIVER TRAIL MASTER PLAN UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) Adopt a resolution adopting the Addendum to the Guadalupe River Trail Master Plan Mitigated Negative Declaration previously adopted by City Council Resolution No. 78236 on June 20, 2017, in accordance with CEQA.
- (b) Approve the first amended Guadalupe River Trail Master Plan (File No. PP17-027) to include the Santa Clara Valley Water District current design guidance for trail development.

SUMMARY AND OUTCOME

Approval of the amended Guadalupe River Trail Master Plan confirms the scope of work that can be developed without risk of conflict with future flood control improvements. Staff would use one or both documents to advance projects, per City Council authorization of funds, for design and construction of the trail improvements.

The design approach incorporated in the amended Guadalupe River Trail Master Plan (Virginia Street to Chynoweth Avenue) reflects input from Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) on the flood protection evaluation study occurring in conjunction with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) that is slated for completion by 2024. The study will define a preferred and future flood protection project within the limits of the trail master plan.

Approval of the incorporated language will support design and construction of the trail in alignment with Army Corps' future flood improvement construction.

BACKGROUND

The regional Guadalupe River Trail system is identified in multiple City planning documents. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services' (Department) strategic plans (Greenprint 2000 and 2009) have called for development of the system as part of the Trail Network. The Department's current strategic plan, ActivateSJ, calls for development of trail systems as part of a 100-mile paved off-street Trail Network (Goal S-4). The San José Envision 2040 General Plan establishes Goal PR-7 for an Interconnected Parks System and guides that outcome through a citywide network of trails, including the Guadalupe River Trail system.

The City's Trail Program Strategic Plan¹ defines the Guadalupe River Trail as a core trail system within the interconnected network of Edge and Core Trail Systems. This designation indicates the trail system as a primary and long-distance route that serves both recreation and active transportation needs.

The Guadalupe River Trail Master Plan defines trail improvements that close a 4.9-mile gap in the core trail system. The Guadalupe River extends about 16 miles from Gold Street in Alviso at the San Francisco Bay to Lake Almaden at the confluence with Los Alamitos Creek and Guadalupe Creek, near Coleman Road in south San José. To date, 10.8 miles of the trail system (presented from north to south) have been developed and are open for recreation and active transportation: 9.4 miles from Gold Street to Virginia Street and 1.4 miles from Chynoweth Avenue to Coleman Road.

Work on the Guadalupe River Trail Master Plan commenced in 2015 and was adopted by City Council on June 20, 2017. Valley Water was coordinating with Army Corps to develop a 100-year flood protection plan for the planning area. The agencies collaborated during the project period. However, after completion of the Master Plan, Valley Water was notified its plan did not meet federal conditions for Return on Investment (the project cost for 100-year flood protection exceeded the anticipated losses from a large flood event). Since that notification, Valley Water has resumed work with the Army Corps and has developed its current plan with a 20-year flood event goal. This change in Valley Water's planning direction has led to necessary updates to the City's Guadalupe River Trail Master Plan. Valley Water wrote a letter to the City in 2017 raising concerns with the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Guadalupe River Trail Master Plan approved by the City Council on June 20, 2017. The City and Valley Water entered into a tolling agreement effective July 19, 2017 that has been extended numerous times over the years to allow the City and Valley Water to work through the concerns raised by Valley Water. The tolling agreement expired on February 28, 2023, and is being extended to May 28, 2023.

¹ Link address: <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/57511>

ANALYSIS

The updates to the Guadalupe River Trail Master Plan reflect how the City will design and construct the project to not impede future flood control operations. The amended Master Plan will guide the development of the trail from the northern terminus of Virginia Street to the southern terminus of Chynoweth Avenue.

The Amended Master Plan confirms that the trail and associated bridge structure are feasible and will meet the following design conditions:

Infrastructure Parameters

- Meet Class I Bikeway Design Standards (eight feet functional width, minimum);
- In some cases, site constraints prevent maintenance vehicle access;
- Elevated to support a 1.6-foot freeboard above the 100-year flood elevation; and
- Design development subject to Valley Water coordination and permitting.

Aesthetic / Placemaking Features

- Trail gateways, where appropriate; and
- Decorative pavement features that are common to the trail system.

Site Development Parameters

- Develop trail via a Joint Trail Agreement with Valley Water, per the City's Collaborative Action Plan ².

Staff coordinated the Addendum to the Guadalupe River Trail Master Plan Mitigated Negative Declaration and amendments to the Master Plan with Valley Water and believe the changes addressed Valley Water's prior concerns.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The Guadalupe River Trail Master Plan update will be posted on the Trail Program website, specifically on the *Guadalupe River Trail* page:

<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/Home/Components/FacilityDirectory/FacilityDirectory/2985/2058>

Development of the trail system will occur over time. Staff will report on progress of Guadalupe River Trail at regularly scheduled City Council office meetings with Department staff.

²Approved January 21, 2003, Joint Meeting of the San José City Council, San José Redevelopment Agency Board, and Valley Water, Item 2(c).

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office; the City Manager's Budget Office; the Department of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement; and the Department of Public Works.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council Agenda website for the March 21, 2023 City Council meeting.

Outreach was undertaken for this item in addition to the agenda posting described above. These outreach efforts are described below.

During the outreach process, staff engaged with the South San José's Erikson Neighborhood through multiple meetings. The outreach for the Guadalupe River Trail Master Plan provided the community the opportunity to share feedback on trail alignment and design. The project team also conducted three community workshops at the Gardner Community Center prior to City Council approval of the trail Master Plan in June 2017.

Recently, on August 31, 2022, staff re-engaged with the Erikson Neighborhood community through a community outreach meeting at the Pearl Street Library. During this meeting, staff presented an update on trail development. The trail master plan did not substantially change since the 2015 and 2016 community workshops, and the community input shared at the 2022 update meeting did not alter the scope for project. From the August 2022 re-engagement meeting, the neighborhood is supportive of the trail development.

Below is a summary of project outreach meeting dates, purpose, and number of attendees:

Meeting	Purpose	Date	Attendees
1	Gather Data (Workshop #1)	September 21, 2015	24
2	Evaluate Plan & Discuss Refinements (Workshop #2)	December 1, 2015	13
3	Confirm the Plan (Workshop #3)	January 20, 2016	17
4	Master Plan and Bridge Update (Re-engagement)	August 31, 2022	30

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT

The Guadalupe River Trail Master Plan, in draft form, was presented to the City's Parks and Recreation Commission on February 1, 2017. The commission voted unanimously to recommend that City Council approve the draft Master Plan.

The update to the Master Plan does not alter the trail alignment and Valley Water guidance will not lead to an operational change. For this reason, the Amended Master Plan was not presented again to the commission.

CEQA

Addendum to the Guadalupe River Trail Master Plan (Resolution No. 78236), File No. ER22-209.

PUBLIC SUBSIDY REPORTING

This item does not include a public subsidy as defined in section 53083 or 53083.1 of the California Government Code or the City's Open Government Resolution.

/s/
JON CICIRELLI
Director, Department of Parks,
Recreation and Neighborhood Services

The principal author of this memorandum is Liz Sewell, Trail Manager. For questions, please contact liz.sewell@sanjoseca.gov.