

Select FILE --> PRINT to print this story.

News - Friday, May 1, 2009

Another big step for Stevens Creek Trail

Thanks to new improvements, it now extends from Cuesta Park to Shoreline

by Daniel DeBolt

Workers put the final touches on the Stevens Creek Trail extension to Sleeper Avenue late last week, opening the door for local residents south of El Camino Real to the joys of the much-loved pathway.

The extension is only 2,700 feet long and cost \$1.1 million. But the smiling joggers, walkers and bikers on the trail in the days after its unofficial opening last Friday seemed to think it was money well spent.

"It's the best thing ever," said Greg Sharrow, a resident of nearby Los Altos, who was riding his bike on the extension Monday evening. "I've been waiting for it to open for weeks. When I saw it was open, I pounced on it."

Sharrow even bought a bike for the occasion. Now he rides the 4.8-mile trail to Shoreline Park and "it's beautiful," he said. "I couldn't be happier."

For their money, taxpayers now have access to a large open space area along Highway 85 that had been fenced off by PG&E for years. The area features over 600 new native trees and shrubs and a new bridge over the creek to Sleeper Avenue, where a trail entrance winds through a small park under a canopy of pine trees.

Pedestrians in the neighborhood previously had to navigate busy El Camino Real to reach the trail, but the trail's extension — and the tunnel under El Camino, which was finished last year — fixes that. It's now possible to walk or bike from Cuesta Park to Shoreline Park and encounter only one street crossing: Grant Road.

Meanwhile, workers are putting the final touches on a new Stevens Creek Trail over-crossing at Moffett Boulevard, which is scheduled to be done near the end of May.

Jim Petersen now takes his wheelchair-bound mother for strolls on the trail — which he said they both enjoy — now that there is an entrance a few hundred feet away from her house near Sleeper Avenue. The trail will mean increased pedestrian traffic in Waverly Park, the residential neighborhood east of El Camino Hospital, but Petersen said that doesn't bother him.

Bill and Kerry O'Brien say they've heard one neighbor grumble about the pedestrian traffic, but it doesn't bother the O'Briens either. They said they can now walk their two dogs and not "have to worry about getting hit by the kids driving to the high school."

City manager Kevin Duggan said the trail will also be a boon for Mountain View High School students who live in northern Mountain View and want to walk or bike to school. It may also encourage residents of the neighborhood around Sleeper Avenue to walk or bike to work.

"The trail links the community together in a way we haven't seen since all the freeways went in and streets went in," Duggan said. "This restores those connections by going up and over all those obstructions."

Two Sunnyvale residents said they were waiting for the next trail extension, which would take the trail across

Highway 85 to the Dale-Heatherstone neighborhood near the Sunnyvale border.

"I can't believe it's not funded yet," said jogger Eric Johnson of Sunnyvale, pointing to a sign describing the plan near Sleeper Avenue.

The city has yet to fund the \$5 million for the next extension, but the City Council appeared to support the project in a study session earlier this month. Public works engineer Bob Kagiya has applied for several federal grants for the project, and construction could begin by April 2010.

The elevated Stevens Creek Trail crossing at Moffett Boulevard will wrap up near the end of May. An official ceremony for both of the completed projects will be held around that time.

E-Mail Daniel DeBolt at ddebolt@mv-voice.com

Find this article at:

http://www.mv-voice.com/story.php?story_id=5069