

The Mercury News

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Mercury News editorial: A real trail system for Santa Clara County is within grasp

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The goal of establishing a real trail network in Santa Clara County at times has looked doubtful. But thanks to the tenacity of the volunteer group Save Our Trails, success is within our grasp -- in the form of the Three Creeks Trail, the missing link that would turn disconnected trails into a complete system for getting around the valley.

The goal can move much closer tonight if the county Open Space Authority agrees to San Jose's request to kick in another \$1 million for the purchase of Union Pacific Railroad right of way. If you care, drop by the board meeting and speak up. It's at 6 p.m. at the authority's headquarters, 6980 Santa Teresa Blvd. in San Jose.

We already have the Los Gatos Creek Trail, the Guadalupe River Park, the Highway 87 Bikeway and the Coyote Creek Trail -- all great places to walk or bike. But the Three Creeks Trail will provide the three-mile crosstown connection to tie them into a network. This will exponentially increase the potential of Silicon Valley trails to become not just fun escapes but also a way to get from one place to another in the urban region of the future.

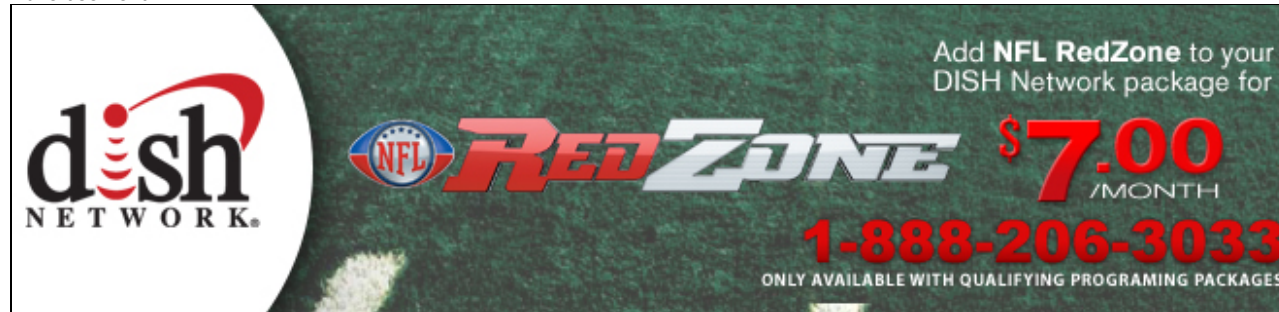
San Jose has come up with several million dollars, and next month the Santa Clara County supervisors

will vote on a \$2 million allocation from the voter-designated Park Charter Fund for regional parks and open space. The Open Space Authority already has contributed \$2 million toward the project, and we hope it can find another \$1 million.

Unlike the city and county, its primary mission is trails and open space.

As regions like this become more dense and traffic-clogged, trails join mass transit as increasingly practical alternatives for getting to work or to recreation. The Three Creeks Trail is an opportunity that will vanish if the land is chopped up and developed. This is the time to act.

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