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Sunday, July 6, 2008

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0827 | Thursday, July 3, 2008

NEWS

### New trail to connect downtown, neighborhoods

By Stephen Baxter

A trail from Auzerais Avenue to downtown San Jose along the Los Gatos Creek is in the works, and officials say it will help bicyclists pedal faster to downtown and catch trains at the San Jose Diridon Station.

The San Jose City Council approved a master plan for Reach 5 of the Los Gatos Creek Trail on June 17, which will blaze a trail of roughly one mile from Auzerais to Santa Clara Street. The path will wind through one of San Jose's most urban areas, and city trail manager Yves Zsutty said linking walkers and cyclists to Guadalupe River Park will be an important addition to the network.

"The Los Gatos Creek Trail, just by observation, is the most popular trail in the area. So to be able to connect it to the 'Central Park' of San Jose is pretty important," he said.

The 12-foot-wide trail will pick up where the recently completed Reach 4 leaves off, at a housing development under construction at Auzerais Avenue and the Los Gatos Creek. It will wind along the creek under the W. San Carlos Street bridge and continue along the edge of a San Jose Fire Department training facility.

From there it will cross the San Fernando Light Rail Station, on to W. San Fernando Street, continuing on to S. Autumn and S. Montgomery streets to San Jose Diridon Station. Its final leg crosses W. Santa Clara St. on the street to the edge of Guadalupe River Park.

All funds to create the trail have not been secured, but planners hope the trail will be completed in five years.

Officials say the largest obstacle is the undercrossing at W. San Carlos

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Street, in part because Caltrain plans to widen the span in its own project. The proposed trail's close proximity to the creek means the trail will have to satisfy federal waterway rules.

City trail mapmakers have to design the trail so it won't harm animal habitat or the creek, yet will be safe for cyclists if the water rises in a flood.

Cyclists, runners and walkers are expected to use the path, and bicycle advocates praised city leaders for pursuing the trail.

"It's going to be fantastic for bike commuters," said Corinne Winter, executive director of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition.

Informal trails along Los Gatos Creek have been used by the Ohlone Indians since at least the 1700s, according to city documents. Spanish missionaries also walked on the trails, and creek water served farmers in a dedicated ditch from roughly the 1850s.

North of Auzerais, the path will pass the Del Monte Plant 3 water tower, one of several facilities where fruit from valley orchards was preserved and canned.

One of Mayor Chuck Reed's Green Vision goals is to have 100 miles of connected trails open by 2022, and San Jose had 49.7 miles open as of June 25.

*For more information on trails in the city, visit [www.sjparks.org/trails](http://www.sjparks.org/trails).*

