

# The Mercury News

MercuryNews.com

## Willow Glen recreation enthusiasts have recently been given a couple of boosts in their efforts to get more trail space in the area.

Mercury News

Article Launched: 11/16/2007 12:53:21 PM PST

Earlier this month, the San Jose City Council voted to begin negotiations with Union Pacific to buy a three-mile stretch of land on an abandoned rail line to build a walking and biking path.

That announcement came on the heels of the city opening a half-mile trail along Los Gatos Creek under Interstate 280 that links Willow Glen to downtown.

Opening that small portion of the trail, which cost \$4 million and took about 10 years to piece together, is considered a key part of a trail network that some hope will eventually connect San Francisco Bay to the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The Los Gatos Creek Trail traverses Los Gatos, Campbell and much of Willow Glen over its 11-mile length. The city hopes to extend the trail into downtown to connect with the Guadalupe River Trail near HP Pavilion within five years.

The next section of the trail north to San Carlos Street, being built by developer KB Home as part of its conversion of the old Del Monte cannery on Auzerais Avenue into 148 townhomes and 235 condominium units, is expected to open next year.

Beyond that, though, the spur's opening encouraged trail advocates in their efforts to use the abandoned rail line, which served as a key transportation system during the valley's agricultural years, into a hiking and biking trail.

The three-mile stretch that the city is negotiating to acquire along the Union Pacific lines could cost as much as \$20 million. San Jose officials have about \$4 million already and the county has also agreed to spend an additional \$2 million toward the purchase of the rail line, which would connect the Los Gatos Creek Trail to the Guadalupe River Trail and on to the Coyote Creek Trail.

The city council is expected to revisit the issue once Union Pacific and city staff members can come to terms on price.

Union Pacific cut rail service along the stretch of land about five years ago. The tracks and the ties on the property, which runs through three council districts, have since been removed, and parts of the old rail line have become a makeshift walking trail.

The property borders both residential and industrial areas. Real estate brokers have also expressed interest in purchasing the land from Union Pacific. A developer has already purchased one property on the residential side of the proposed trail to build a 15-unit housing development.

Advertisement

**MercuryNews.com**  
The Mercury News

**(800) 870-NEWS**

**Subscribe today!**

[www.mercurynews.com](http://www.mercurynews.com)



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™