

Consensus Reached on Multi-Use Path to Reservoir

By Cathy Tyson



Photo provided by Scott Honegger, Chair of the Creeks Committee

EBMUD has agreed to fund a multi-purpose pathway on the south side of Mt. Diablo Boulevard from the Village Center to the Reservoir entrance. “We asked EBMUD to provide funds to mitigate the impact on the public,” said Associate Engineer Matt Luttrupp, of EBMUD’s infrastructure upgrade near the Lafayette treatment plant on the north side of this same section of Mt. Diablo Boulevard. Because the bike lane and sidewalk on the north side of the street won’t be available, having a multi-use path for bicyclists, joggers, and families with strollers became increasingly important for the south side.

Lafayette City Staff estimate the project will cost roughly \$215,000. In fact, Luttrupp commented that lately these types of small projects have come in under-budget due to the lack of jobs for contractors.

Before anticipated construction starts in 2009, a final recommendation needs to be completed and will be presented for approval at the City Council meeting this

week.

Coming to an agreement by all interested parties has been challenging at times. There are many groups who wanted input on the project: Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Ad-Hoc CIP Review (with representatives of Planning and Design Review) Circulation Commission, and the Creeks committee. Lafayette’s Public Works Subcommittee facilitated a meeting to come to a consensus recently.

“Trade-offs, that’s what this meeting is about” commented Mayor Mike Anderson who was acting as moderator. At issue were the width of the walkway, the alignment - meandering or straight, landscaping and the surfacing material.

As an example of the many choices for each component, there were four options of surfacing material, each with benefits and drawbacks. Concrete asphalt, decomposed granite, decorative brick pavers and porous concrete, a new permeable surface similar to a rice-crispy treat, were available.

At one point, there was discussion of a split-rail fence, similar to the relatively new fence along Moraga Road, now covered with flowering potato vines to divide the path from the road. This would have provided a visual barrier, but the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee didn’t like the idea. Their argument was the fence could “trap” bikers between the car lanes and the fence.

Compromises by the various groups were made and in the end a proposal for a five-foot on-street bike lane, a straight 10-foot-wide pathway with a porous concrete surface and informal landscaping between the pathway and the creek will be presented to EBMUD.

“It’s in negotiations right now. We are trying to come to a mutually agreeable solution,” said Charles Hardy, spokesman for EBMUD.