

Comments Received Regarding the Fancher Creek Trail Project

Comment 1:

I appreciate the opportunity to learn about this project, and I'm happy it's the Fancher Creek Trail. I think it will make our area nicer. Thank you!

Response 1:

Thank you for your comments.

Comment 2:

Thank you for your presentation. Very informative. We would like to continue being informed with the project process.

Response 2:

Thank you for your comments.

Comment 3:

What is plan with the strip that feeds into park circle from the trail?

Response 3:

If there is sufficient funding, some or all of the following improvements will be made:

1. Demolition clear and grub of weeds
2. Prune up existing Junipers and Crepe Myrtle trees
3. Install DG path from the trail through the easement to the pavement at Park Circle.
4. Irrigation
5. Planting of small trees on the south side, and perhaps some screening shrubs

Thank you for your comments.

Comment 4:

Trail is fine but, maintenance of what is here now is critical.

Response 4:

The County has limited maintenance funds, and the funding to construct the project cannot be used for maintenance activities. Hopefully, the County will be able to continue to work with the Sunnyside Property Owners Association, Tree Fresno, and the High Sierra Volunteer Trail Crew to get the most out of the County's limited funding for maintenance. Thank you for your comments.

Comment 5:

Our biggest concern is cutting down the dead trees before they hurt someone. How does this affect property values and privacy issues to home owners? What about trash along the trail who will take care of this?

Response 5:

The available project budget only allows for tree removal as part of the trail improvement project, and we cannot use the funding we have for a stand-alone tree removal project. Any trees that are nearing the end of their useful life or which may be prone to falling will be removed when the portion of the trail in which they are located is constructed. We cannot assess what impact, if any, the project may have on property values. Users of the trail and particularly equestrian users may be able to see over property owners' fences, as would be the case now if the trail were accessible to equestrian users. Regarding cleaning up of trash and maintenance in general, see Response 4, above.

Thank you for your comments.

Comments Received Regarding the Fancher Creek Trail Project

Comment 6:

No bridle path period. If you don't live on the canal then don't tell me that I have to have people walking up against my fence. There are too many people who cause trouble behind my property and are a bad influence.

Response 6:

Thank you for your comments.

Comment 7:

The concept is a great idea but the past has proven that Fresno County always comes up with projects that look good on paper, but they fall short when it comes to reality. The residents are forced to accept their ideas and then they're all made the ones who have to maintain and fix any problems that occur.

Response 7:

Thank you for your comments.

Comment 8:

Important to keep the big trees that represent our Sunnyside Bridle Trail that is so unique. Crosswalk at Butler – no lights please.

Response 8:

Efforts have been made to ensure that the design incorporates the preservation of large existing trees to the greatest extent possible. The crosswalk will be designed to ensure safety for pedestrians, equestrians, and motorists. Your comments will be considered, but safety will be the first priority. Thank you for your comments.

Comment 9a:

The comments in this letter are submitted for the public information meeting to be held Wednesday, March 16. I am a resident whose property abuts the proposed trail. There are two comments, both pertaining to the alignment of the trail.

The portion of the trail from Kings Canyon to the railroad bridge has been located on the county-owned strip referred to as the "bridle path", with the existing FID access road adjoining the trail to the west. It is my understanding that one or more of the three parties participating in the trail (County, SPOA, Tree Fresno) did not want to work with FID, which has resulted an agreement with the FID that does not permit use of the FID road. Historically, FID had legitimate concerns regarding liability, and discouraged public use of its roads. State-level action several years ago mitigated such concerns for FID, who is now participating in trail development along its banks with the City of Fresno, as is noted in today's Fresno Bee editorial. FID is not unique in allowing its banks to be used as trails, as evidenced by the very successful efforts in the City of Visalia in developing the St. John's Parkway trail along irrigation district banks there.

Unless trail users are specifically barred from the canal bank, users are likely to preferentially use the canal bank rather than the proposed trail. The proposed alignment eliminates the views of the water and wildlife, a condition accentuated by a trail elevation up to 3' below the canal bank elevation on the southerly portion. The proposed alignment reduces the amount of natural area and trees in the bridle path by at least one-third. The proposed alignment brings users to within a few feet of the often visually undesirable rear yards of adjoining properties, with fences being chain link or wood.

Locating the trail on the canal bank would have several benefits:

- ***Reduced construction expense***
- ***Reduced and simplified maintenance***
- ***Enhanced enjoyment by trail users***
- ***Greater wildlife habitat opportunities***

The portion of the trail paralleling the railroad tracks has been laid out to replace the existing access road with a tightly curving design that is not compatible with vehicular use of road, which will continue at its

Comments Received Regarding the Fancher Creek Trail Project

current rate. A City truck uses the road daily, FID and Country trucks periodically, and PG&E contract tree trimmers seasonally, in addition to use by residents and the occasional fire truck. Following the surveying and staking of the trail, drivers have commented on their inability to make the tight turns required. Additionally, the existing road alignment contains a water line of some size originating at the well pump near the canal and extending to Clovis Avenue. Altering the alignment creates the possibility of planting trees over the buried pipe.

The existing road alignment has gentle curves recognizing trees and plantings that are not planned for removal, and has slight changes in elevation. Continuing to use the existing alignment would avoid the noted situation for vehicles and maintain access to the buried pipe while preserving an enjoyable user experience.

Response 9a:

As part of the design process for the project, the County sent a letter to FID requesting information on their facilities. In FID's response, they indicated that:

- FID will not allow the trail easement to be in common use with FID-owned property or easements.
- FID requires that all trail improvements be placed outside of FID-owned property properties and easements.
- FID will not allow any portion of a tree canopy to encroach within its properties or easements.
- FID's canals will not accept any drainage from the trail or the canal bank.

Furthermore, it is the intent of the project to restore, improve and revitalize the existing easement which was expressly set aside for use as an equestrian trail.

I will forward your letter to our design consultant so that they may consider the issues associated with vehicular access via the existing trail and the potential that plantings could interfere with the existing water line to which you refer.

Thank you for your comments.

Follow-up Comment 9b:

I would be interested in an explanation of why FID will work with the city of Fresno and not with Fresno County to allow use of the canal banks as trails. I do recognize FID's historic position, but didn't the state level action change the need for FID to take such a position? As I understand it, the agreement with FID was reached without an attempt to use its banks as a trail.

I agree wholeheartedly with the intent to clean up and recognize that existing bridle path area where vegetation is excessive and some must be removed. But please clear up a point: is the bridle path truly an easement from adjoining property owners, or is it owned by the county?

FID has never been very attentive to its requirement that trees not overhang its easement, as can be observed in the present condition of its access road along Fancher Creek. I appreciate that this is the case, and hope they will not enforce this requirement in the future.

Follow-up Response 9b:

With regard to the potential use of the FID easement, that was not something we pursued aggressively with FID, and I do not know if they would have been receptive to the concept if we had. Perhaps if we wished to construct a trail using their easement, they may have been receptive to the concept if we had no viable alternative as may be the case with the City project to which you refer. Sorry, but I don't have a definitive answer for you regarding FID's potential willingness to allow use of their easements for trails. I am not familiar with the state action to which you refer.

The bridle path is not "owned" by the County, but an easement was established when the property originally subdivided. The easement was offered for dedication (by the then-owner of the entire property which was subdivided) for a specified public use. This dedication was accepted by the County and it is therefore within the County's purview to construct improvements within the easement that are consistent with the public use for which it was dedicated. In short, the easement itself is not owned by the County, but it is under the County's jurisdiction on behalf of the public.

Regarding your concerns about vehicles that use a portion of the existing path, our consultant has responded that the north-to-south portion of the alignment is not intended for vehicular use. Regarding the east-to-west

Comments Received Regarding the Fancher Creek Trail Project

portion of the alignment, the curves should be easily negotiated by standard service vehicles and that can be confirmed during design development by Lars Andersen.

Thank you for your comments.

Comment 10:

This letter is in response to a Public Information Meeting letter mailed out to property owners regarding the Fancher Creek Bridle Path revitalization project, currently in proposal. The letter states one part of the scope of the project includes removal of trees. We would like to express great concern toward removing one tree in particular which grows in the existing bridle path easement, and possibly the new trail alignment. It is a 16-inch diameter tree, and is currently growing in the horizontal direction. As residents of the property next to the tree for over 37 years now, we can say that the tree has been leaning more and more every year, but has been growing more horizontal in most recent years. A person used to be able to walk under it easily, but not anymore due to the extreme lean.

Within the past couple of years, there has been a spike in activity around the tree. As residents of the property and travelers who walk the FID Access Road next to the Fancher Creek Bridal Path, we have been able to notice an increased number of strangers, homeless and teenagers stopping and hanging out around the tree. The homeless people usually set up a bed made out of cardboard, foam, or tarps, and camp underneath the tree. Then when they leave during the day, we (the property owners) gather up the trash they leave behind and discard it in our personal trash containers in order to keep the path's area looking good. Lately a group of teenagers have been seen up in the tree. Just last week there were 5 teenagers up in the tree. They were smoking and doing drugs. On one occasion last summer when everything was very dry the kids left an unextinguished cigarette in the bark of the tree. The kids took off walking towards Butler and left the lit cigarette in the tree still smoking. Luckily I was outside and smelled the smoke and quickly got the hose to put out the potential fire (as there is many leaves and weeds on the ground). The sheriff has been called several times in order to deal with the strange people who congregate at the tree in hopes that they will move on or return to their homes, and not return to the tree. Just on Sunday March 6th I found in the tree a homemade devise that the kids use for smoking marijuana. That same group of kids has also been seen with knives and cutting branches and carving words in the tree. My daughter saw them with a large hunting knife. Again the Sheriff was called out.

The tree is a major safety concern and leaving it would pose a huge risk not only for the property owners but also for anyone who travels along the Fancher Creek path. First of all, the property owners are not familiar with and do not know any of the homeless people or teenagers and feel unsafe when they are around our homes. We do not want any illegal activity occurring around our homes. When we are in our back yard and people are at the tree, we can hear and see them and we know they can hear and see us on our property. Second, tree is leaning so much that it might fall at any time and seriously injure someone. And third, the easement is not their property, and is not where they should be living or hanging out.

We are writing this letter to provide some input in hopes to remedy the situations arising at the unsafe tree with the unwanted guests it attracts. We hope that the County's project will not be affected if the tree is removed as part of the revitalization of the path.

Response 10:

The tree in question was evaluated by the project arborist and was not found to be near the end of its useful life nor was it found to be a hazard in terms of falling over. At this point in time, the tree in question is anticipated to remain. Thank you for your comments.

Comment 11:

My husband and I have lived in what's considered the Old Sunnyside area for going on six years. We were somewhat of the start of the new, younger generation moving into the area. Since then, many families with children have moved into the area. We are huge supporters of this area maintaining its value and safety. We, amongst many other neighbors and younger families, agree that the Sunnyside area lacks in many of the amenities that Clovis and North Fresno have. We need walking trails and parks! As well as higher end shopping. We love to walk our dogs down the fancher creek bridal trail, but as woman walking by myself at times, safety is a concern. We need paved and well lit walking trails like other areas of town have. It would

Comments Received Regarding the Fancher Creek Trail Project

bring a sense of community to our area and help maintain the integrity of our great neighborhoods. Not only is it necessary along the bridal trail, but also east of that where we live (near Burgan and Butler in the old neighborhood). There aren't any walking or excersizing amenities or parks for that matter. I hope you take this into consideration when deciding how to handle the bridal trail and other developments in our area that we truly love.

Response 11:

Due to limited funding, the project scope does not include lighting for the trail. Thank you for your comments.