



# CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

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MEETING DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2010

ITEM NUMBER: \_\_\_\_

**SUBJECT: BICYCLE TRAIL CONNECTION BETWEEN SANTA ANA RIVER AND UPPER NEWPORT BAY**

**DATE: NOVEMBER 24, 2010**

**FROM: PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT - TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIVISION**

**PRESENTATION BY: PETER NAGHAVI, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: RAJA SETHURAMAN, TRANSPORTATION SERVICES MANAGER - (714) 754-5032**

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Authorize staff to conduct a feasibility study of a proposed bicycle trail connection between the Santa Ana River and Upper Newport Bay partially utilizing the Paularino and Santa Ana/Delhi Flood Control Channels (Attachment 1).

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Transportation Services Division maintains the Citywide Master Plan of Bikeways (MPB) (Attachment 2). The MPB designates three classes of bikeways as follows:

**Class I** – Off-street bicycle trails that provide dedicated concrete or asphalt pavement outside of travel lanes;

**Class II** – On-street dedicated (striped) bicycle lanes; and

**Class III** – On-street bike routes designated with sign without any dedicated lanes.

The City has several Class I bicycle trails, Class II bicycle lanes, and Class III bicycle routes. However, due to significant right-of-way needed, the number of Class I bicycle trails are limited in the City. Approximately three years ago, staff completed a preliminary investigation of potential use of existing flood control maintenance roads for development of Class I bicycle facilities. This study determined that Paularino and Santa Ana/Delhi Channels may be suitable for providing a bicycle trail on their existing and/or improved maintenance roads.

The utilization of flood control channels for bicycle facilities was presented to City Council at their Study Session on May 8, 2007, and regular meetings of June 5, 2007, December 4, 2007, and January 15, 2008. A comprehensive chronology of events of the proposed bicycle trail project is included in Attachment 3. At the meeting of January 15, 2008, the City Council, based on resident concerns, directed staff to suspend efforts on this project. Attachments 4 and 5 show all correspondence from residents with regard to this project.

The Planning Commission requested staff to present this item at their November 8, 2010, meeting. At that meeting, the Planning Commission reviewed the proposed concept and discussed the current neighborhood concerns related to potential issues with the proposed bicycle trail. Based on adjacent residents' concerns on the Paularino Channel, the Commission discussed graffiti, vandalism, and alcohol and drug use within the channel area. Even though the channel is gated

and fenced at either end, it is not protected from illegal entry. The residents expressed concerns that these problems may be exacerbated with the implementation of the bicycle trail project providing open access to the public. The Commission, while recommending the City Council approval of the feasibility study, directed that the study should also review the residents' concerns and recommend measures to address these existing and future issues. The Commission also recommended that a corridor-based study be conducted to consider other bicycle trail alignments, including Arlington Drive.

## **ANALYSIS:**

The City is served by major Orange County trails that run along the eastern and western boundaries. The 22-mile Mountains to Sea trail from Irvine Lake to Upper Newport Bay and Newport Beach is along the eastern City boundary and on the west is the 29-mile Santa Ana Regional Bicycle Trail connecting Riverside County and Huntington Beach. While there are many access connections to these regional trails in Costa Mesa, there is not a defined and direct bicycle trail or system that links both trails.

Recently, the City's Public Services Department received a grant to add a bicycle trail connecting the Santa Ana River Trail to Placentia Avenue adjacent to Fairview Channel within Fairview Park. In addition, a project is currently underway that improves the Joann Street Bicycle Trail and also the bicycle trail along Harbor Boulevard north of the Joann Street Bicycle Trail. As these various projects are planned and implemented, it is desirable to achieve a well-defined, east-west bicycle trail connection to upper Newport Bay. East-west bicycle facilities in Costa Mesa are typically Class II on-street bicycle lanes and are provided on Adams Avenue, Merrimac Way, and Fair Drive.

Staff has reviewed several options for implementation of an east-west bicycle connection and has determined that the flood control maintenance roads could be used effectively as part of this system, based on Orange County Flood Control District (OCFCD) concurrence. The Paularino Channel could be used to provide off-street trails from east of Fairview Road just north of Adams Avenue to the Bristol Street/Bear Street intersection. The Santa Ana/Delhi Channel connects Bristol Street south of Newport Boulevard North Frontage Road and Irvine Avenue. Existing bicycle lanes on Irvine Avenue provide access to the Upper Newport Bay trail system. Further review is required for the Bristol Street portion of the above connection between Bear Street and the Santa Ana/Delhi Flood Control Channel, as existing right-of-way is limited for the provision of dedicated bicycle paths or lanes. During meetings, the OCFCD agreed in "concept" that such a system could be further considered for potential implementation.

A portion of the flood control channel bicycle system would be directly behind several single-family and multi-family dwellings. Based on input from adjacent residents, while potential benefits exist, concerns with the trail's negative impacts have been raised. Staff recognizes the need to outreach to all affected residents during the planning phase to evaluate the feasibility of such a trail. Similar bicycle trails have been successfully implemented in adjacent jurisdictions and also in other areas of Costa Mesa.

The feasibility study will include an extensive outreach process with all residents near the proposed trail in order to review current as well as potential concerns along the Paularino Channel, develop measures to address these concerns, and conduct a review of alternative alignments of the bicycle trail. Based on the results of the feasibility study and public input, a decision on whether to include this trail in the City's MPB could be determined by the City Council. Other phases of the project such as design, environmental review, and implementation of the project will be conducted following the incorporation of the bicycle trail on the City's MPB based on the City Council approval process.

**ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:**

One alternative would be to receive and file this report.

**FISCAL REVIEW:**

The feasibility study, which will include outreach to the affected residents, is expected to cost approximately \$35,000. Staff will solicit proposals from qualified consultants for this service. Funds for the feasibility study have not been budgeted at this time. Based on City Council direction, staff will determine the feasibility of utilizing future Air Quality Management District (AQMD) grant funds or obtain other funding sources for this study. The cost for the design and construction of the bicycle trail will depend on the final alignment option and the mitigation measures to be incorporated as part of the project.

**LEGAL REVIEW:**

There is no legal review of this item at this time.

**CONCLUSION:**

The Planning Commission, in order to improve the east-west bicycle facility connection between the Santa Ana River Regional Bicycle Trail and Mountains to Sea Bicycle Trail, recommended that the City Council approve a study to determine the feasibility of implementing this connecting system utilizing the Paularino and Santa Ana/Delhi Flood Control Channels. This report summarizes previous activities and analysis, as well as correspondence on this item. Staff requests the City Council consideration of the Planning Commission's recommendation regarding the feasibility study. The study will include an extensive outreach process with the residents in order to review current as well as potential concerns of residents along the Paularino Channel, develop measures to address these concerns, and conduct a review of alternative alignments of the bicycle trail.

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Department of Public Services

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Assistant City Manager  
City Clerk  
Dev. Svcs. Director  
Director of Public Services  
Staff

ATTACHMENTS: 1 - [Proposed Bicycle Trail Alignment](#)  
2 - [City's Master Plan of Bikeways](#)  
3 - [Chronology of Events](#)  
4 - [Correspondence Supporting Bicycle Trail along Flood Control Channels](#)  
5 - [Correspondence Opposing Bicycle Trail along Flood Control Channels](#)