

From: Oakland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

To: Whom it may concern

July 16, 2009

This letter is to express the support of the Oakland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee for the Shepherd Creek Trail per a motion passed on June 18, 2009.

The Shepherd Creek Trail is a unique opportunity to achieve pedestrian accessibility. The trail will provide a valuable connection between residential areas of Montclair, including Shepherd Canyon and Piedmont Pines, and the Commercial District of Montclair Village, Joaquin Miller Elementary School and Monterra Middle School, and transit connections. It will complement the existing trail along the Railroad Right of Way next to Shepherd Canyon Road, forming a pedestrian loop to Montclair Village. This will enhance accessibility especially to the southern end of the village and especially for residents of Shepherd Canyon and Piedmont Pines east of Shepherd Canyon Road. It will also complement planned improvements to the trail along Mountain Blvd to form better connections between residential areas and schools. And it will enhance regional connectivity as well, as part of a Ridge to Bay trail that connects to existing extensive Sausal Creek trails.

In 1975, with great foresight, Oakland planned bicycle and pedestrian access into the creation of the Shepherd Canyon neighborhood. The City Council imposed a building moratorium and completed the Shepherd Canyon Corridor Plan and EIR, which identified loss of publicly accessible open space as a significant impact of development, and identified the Shepherd Creek Trail as a mitigation. The EIR required that a portion of the Shepherd Canyon land (then being sold by Caltrans) be set aside from plans for residential development, for public use as trails. After the EIR was adopted, and as part of its fulfillment, the East Bay Regional Park District (an EIR participant) proceeded to purchase the needed public land described in the EIR "for trail purposes", subject to an agreement with Oakland where the city agreed to assume "sole financial responsibility" to acquire the needed easements for the remainder of the trail and to actually build and maintain the trail. So the development of Shepherd Canyon did proceed, subject to this EIR, and the trail mitigation requirement.

However, the trail has not yet been built and the creek trail parcel acquired by East Bay Regional Park District is still zoned for private residential use (though publicly owned).

We would like to encourage the implementation of this trail. The reasons described in the EIR are still valid today. We understand the city's budget is very constrained and encourage the city to look for funding opportunities. Possibilities include:

- Applying the \$32K per year the city will save through its parcel swap with East Bay Regional Park district towards the Shepherd Canyon Creek Trail. We understand the City and East Bay Regional Park District propose a swap of parcels to achieve savings from consolidated maintenance, and that this swap includes the shepherd creek trail parcel EBRPD bought for trail purposes, where Oakland originally committed to building the trail. In this swap we understand Oakland estimates they will save \$32K dollars per year, and the only parcels in the swap that are coming into city ownership are those in Shepherd Canyon.
- Pursuing outside grant funds, whether city bond funded programs, such as

like measure DD, or state park bond funds, other state grant sources such as Safe Routes to School, or other state or federal funding. This could include considering the substantial resources that have been spent by the City, Shepherd Canyon Homeowner's Association and others for Shepherd Canyon Park improvement as matching funds. Over \$150,000 in resources was spent through public and private resources for a parking lot, which could serve as valuable parking near the trailhead.

- o Considering any other types of trail building resources or labor sources through other programs, programs such as Volunteers of America, or California Department of Forestry, that can be directed towards this effort.

We also suggest that since this land was bought for public use as trails, that the zoning be updated to reflect a public use.

The Shepherd Canyon EIR also required creation of another trail, the trail along the railroad right of way that parallels Shepherd Canyon Road. This other trail was created and is much loved and heavily used. This shows the utility and potential popularity of the companion Shepherd Canyon Creek Trail.

We have carefully reviewed the Shepherd Canyon Creek Trail and support its implementation. We hope the current city council will follow up on the plans set out by their predecessors and create this trail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Bair". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jonathan Bair
Chair, City of Oakland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee