



London N. Breed, Mayor
Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

McLaren Trails Priority Improvements

2012 Clean & Safe Neighborhood Bond Project

Trail Walk: Visitacion Avenue and University Hill

Meet at McLaren Native Plant Garden on Visitacion
6/29/2022 4-5:30pm

Participants:

RPD

Lauren Dietrich Chavez, PM: lauren.chavez@sfgov.org o: 628-652-6643
Christopher Campbell, Acting Director of Natural Resources
Brian Stokle, Planner
Lauren Willey, Planning Intern
Madeleine Galvin, Planning Intern

SFPW

Solange Guillaume, Landscape Designer

GOAL – Partner

Fran Martin, Project Lead for McLaren Native Plant Garden

12 park users/ public

Meeting Goal:

To discuss proposed streetscape improvements along Visitacion Avenue, and how they impact planning for Visitacion trail. To share proposed priority trail improvements, highlight natural resources, and hear park user suggestions for signage that will help people navigate and appreciate McLaren Park.

Meeting Notes:

1. As folks gathered, people were invited to look at posters showing proposed trail improvements and possibilities for Visitacion Avenue design (see attached), participate in an exercise to suggest signage locations, and ask questions of the project team
2. Fran Martin led a brief walk around the new Native Plant Garden and Nature Exploration Area
3. Circle: welcome, introductions, overview
 - a. Brian Stokle spoke about Visitacion Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Improvements
 - i. Project goals are to reduce traffic speeds and improve connectivity for pedestrians and bicycles
 - ii. Project is in planning; full project funding not yet identified



- iii. Main elements being considered:
 - Bike lanes and sidewalks
 - Multi-use path uphill/ NB side, and dedicated bike lane or sharrow downhill/ SB side
 - Two-way cycletrack on downhill/ SB side of street, and new sidewalk on uphill/ NB side (with repaired sidewalk above Middle School)
 - Addition of a new crosswalk at Leland, and new sidewalk on downhill/ SB side of street from Leland to existing sidewalk at Coffman Pool
 - Addition of lighting, most likely below Middle School
- iv. The project is considering three distinct segments of streetscape:
 - Lower, from Hahn to Community Garden/ Leland
 - Parking utilization is primarily in this area, where there are many program opportunities
 - If we want to maintain parking on both sides of the street, we would need to expand the streetscape into parkland
 - Considering sidewalk on both sides to facilitate parking
 - Middle, between Community Garden/ Leland and Middle School
 - Project team is coordinating with other agencies and exploring conflicts at Middle School/ bus stop
 - No sidewalk on the downhill/SB side
 - Planned sidewalk connection, Raymond to Visitacion, south side of Raymond
 - Upper, above Middle School
 - No sidewalk on the downhill/SB side; natural resource area
 - Looking at replacing or repairing sidewalk on uphill/NB side
- b. Lauren Chavez explained that we are sharing an overview of the planning options for Visitacion Ave streetscape because the reality of adding a sidewalk and bicycle facilities to the roadway in the near future has made the project team question whether the adjacent trail should be multi-use, or pedestrian only

4. Walk Visitacion Avenue Trail

- a. Lower, Hahn to Community Garden/ Leland
 - i. Trail segment #1 – Lauren noted proposal for pedestrian only trail of native soil, noting that the Native Plant Garden is intended to be a pedestrian space, with young children playing in the Nature Exploration Area and youth educational gatherings, and regular volunteer activities
 - ii. Participant interest voiced in not having bicycles moving swiftly immediately adjacent to the NPG space
- b. Middle, Community Garden to Middle School (two trail areas)
 - i. Trail segment #2 – Community Garden/ Leland to Raymond – Lauren relayed a proposal not to have a trail in this portion, as parkland is narrow, rare native plants have been found here, and sidewalk is so close
 - Several participants requested a trail be maintained: slightly off road is preferred for many people seeking trail experience; many runners prefer native soil to sidewalk
 - Request voiced to have a seating area on the rise just south of Raymond, where there is a nice view

- ii. At Raymond
 - Lauren noted that a sidewalk connection from Visitacion to Raymond is proposed as part of the Visitacion Streetscape project
 - Evidence of bikes traveling between Raymond and Visitacion here, and participants mentioned seeing vehicles too
 - Lauren to coordinate with operations to have large wood placed to prevent this
 - Interest voiced in establishing a crosswalk to connect new sidewalk and trail segment 2 with trail segment 3
 - Suggestion to add sidewalk on north side of the street so seniors can access park area without having to cross street
 - iii. Trail segment #3 Raymond to Middle School – Project Team is proposing a pedestrian trail on native soil, or potentially slightly improved surface; possible nature exploration area, similar to the one at Native Plant Garden
 - c. Upper, above Middle School – No trail is proposed in the upper portion of Visitacion. The crosswalk (completed last year) connects school to trail network, and sidewalk up to Mansell.
5. Walked up, across Mansell and regrouped at Philosopher’s Lookout, at the top of University Hill/ trail between Mansell Courts and Louis Sutter
6. Discussed and walked through University Hill Grassland
 - a. Lauren mentioned the project proposal to decommission trails and emphasize a primary route up and down the slope that is outside of the grasslands
 - b. Christopher Campbell shared on the trails project proposal and grassland habitat
 - i. Grassland is special, holds many endemic species
 - ii. Currently, there are many social trails fragmenting habitat and causing erosion
 - iii. Hikers bring in invasive seeds that sprout along trails and reduce biodiversity
 - c. Several park users noted their enjoyment of the trails
 - i. Challenge of steep
 - ii. Vistas of City skyline
 - iii. Ability to see other park users, while also having challenging bike experience
 - d. Discussion: if there are any trails, park users will likely create more; best option for habitat protection is to keep all trails out of grassland
 - e. Discussion: if trails are closed, park users will re-open them again
 - i. Acknowledgement from park staff that there will always be social trails
 - ii. Park users offer possible partnership, volunteers to better maintain trails; park staff note there are regular VoCal days and commit to sharing details with those individuals interested
 - Project Team to consider if some trail would be acceptable in grassland, and if so what alignment is most sustainable
 - Project Team to consider potential for collaboration with partners
 - f. Several people made strong requests to use natural features to prevent people from going into natural areas, rather than fencing (boulders, large logs, scrub patches)
7. Discussed and walked through forested area of University Hill

- a. General appreciation voiced for the “ribbon trail” proposed to make a multi-use path connection between Louis Sutter and Mansell Courts, and removal of existing failing asphalt path and box steps
 - b. Tree removals
 - i. Lauren noted that tree removals are planned on the hillside, as needed for trail alignment and hazard removal, and for habitat enhancement
 - ii. Lauren noted that final tree assessments are underway and she’s happy to share the arborist report and summary information once available
 - iii. Staff also noted that trees that will be removed, will be posted for at least 30 days prior to removal
 - c. Habitat discussion
 - i. Park user noted the juncus/ native rush growing near the Hidden Bridges, east of the piped spring, amongst the cypress and suggested possible restoration of wetland
 - ii. Park staff acknowledged that the western edge of the hillside is not a natural resource management area, and some natural feature restoration work is possible
8. Meeting closed and informal conversations continued as folks walked back south, over the hill