



DATE: November 20, 2024

TO: Greg Powell, Principal Planner

FROM: Bjorn Gripenburg, MCRP - Project Manager, Public Works & Utilities (PW&U)
Jeff Stutsman, PE, TE - Deputy Director of Operations, PW&U

SUBJECT: Adobe Creek Trail Bridge Impacts on Active Transportation Connectivity

We understand City Council is likely to weigh “bridge” and “no bridge” alternatives of a proposed bicycle/pedestrian bridge across Adobe Creek as part of the proposed Creekwood Housing Development project at 280 Casa Grande Road. The Public Works & Utilities Department has been asked to weigh-in on these alternatives from a mobility and active transportation perspective. Our staff believes the proposed bridge offers mobility benefits to the surrounding area that are consistent with City policies and goals.

Currently, people travelling between 1) The Grove Luxury Apartments or Spyglass Road neighborhood and 2) Casa Grande High School or any other points northwest must use Ely Boulevard South, a busy four-lane road with Class II (painted) bike lanes that is part of the Sonoma County High-Injury Network. A new bridge would enable people to travel between The Grove or Spyglass Road neighborhood along a more direct route that offers greater separation from vehicle traffic. **For both neighborhoods, the bridge reduces travel distance by approximately 1500 feet, saving five to six minutes for those walking to or from Casa Grande High School.¹**

Likewise, those living on the west bank of Adobe Creek would enjoy more direct access to the Adobe Creek Trail, an existing 1.25 mile multi-use trail that runs from Ely Boulevard South to Shollenberger Park, where it connects with the planned Petaluma River Trail. Currently, people living west of Casa Grande Road must use Casa Grande Road and Sartori Drive to access Adobe Creek Trail.

The City’s Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP), adopted in 2008 as an appendix to General Plan 2025, outlines policies and programs toward creating a safe, comprehensive, and integrated bicycle and pedestrian system throughout Petaluma that encourages bicycling and walking and is accessible to all. BPMP Policies and Programs that support the implementation of the bridge include the following:

¹ Assuming a trip starting on the east bank of the Adobe Creek Trail near the proposed bridge location and ending at the main entrance to Casa Grande High School.

- Policy 6: Ensure that new development provides connections to and does not interfere with existing and proposed bicycle facilities.
- Policy 11: Establish a network of multi-use trails to facilitate safe and direct off-street bicycle and pedestrian travel. At the minimum, Class I standards shall be applied unless otherwise specified.
 - Program E: Build new river (upstream of navigable waters) and creek crossings for bicycles and pedestrians to provide greater connectivity and more efficient cross-town routes.
- Policy 12: Require all new development and those requiring new city entitlements with “frontage” along creeks and the river to permit through travel adjacent to creeks and the river with access points from parallel corridors spaced at minimum intervals of 500 - 1,000 feet.

The City is currently in the process of updating the BPMP and has received several public comments around the importance of and potential to improve Adobe Creek Trail into a safe, convenient, and accessible linkage that facilitates walking, bicycling, and rolling for people of all ages and physical abilities. The trail is bookended to the south by 500 acres of publicly-accessible wetlands and to the north by Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park, with residential neighborhoods, schools, services, and a major employment district nearby.

Constructing a bridge across Adobe Creek Trail at this location is a unique opportunity that will greatly improve the trail’s utility and the overall connectivity for people travelling outside of cars in southeast Petaluma. In addition to the policies noted above, we believe the bridge will support the City’s adopted goals of eliminating severe injuries and deaths from traffic (Vision Zero) and achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.